

# A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

Sunshine State  
Pride and Prejudice  
French Correspondent

EDITION 2  
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# A NEW BRIDGE MAGAZINE

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## The Numbers Game

According to our latest figures, more than 5000 of you will be reading this issue of the magazine. A big thank you to everyone who has registered. An even bigger thank you to those who have become Friends and sent donations, both great and small. We have readers who have created a direct debit, sending us a small sum each month. It will only take a small number of like-minded individuals to ensure our future. We are on the right track, but there is still a great deal to do. In order to ensure the success and longevity of the magazine we ask you to spread the word to all your bridge playing acquaintances. Advertisers love magazines with a massive target audience. On Page 88 you will find details of how you can support the magazine.

## Champagne Moments

Some of you might be aware that your Editor is not averse to watching the odd game of cricket. If you are also a fan of Test Match Special, you may recall that the BBC Radio programme used to award bottles of champagne for events that deserved special recognition. I am minded to do the same in the magazine and am currently completing negotiations with a sponsor. A champagne moment might be anything - from a brilliant piece of play (had Bart Bramley found the overtaking play mentioned in this month's Reisinger report he would have been our first winner) to a readers letter.

## Bridge is no Lottery

Somerset Contract Bridge Association have been successful in applying for a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery to run Fast Track Bridge courses in the county for those aged 24 - 65.

The Association realised that they not only needed an injection of new players, but also younger players. They identified that the time taken to learn via traditional methods was off putting to those with families or full-time jobs, so wanted to use the new Fast Track Bridge books to get people learning more quickly.

Fast Track Bridge is part of the national learning programme, Bridge For All, and gets new players to the table after just 24 hours of lessons.

Their application to the National Lottery focussed on both the mental benefits which come from playing, and also the social benefits which come from the partnerships and communities that bridge forges. The size of the grant from the National Lottery shows society's increasing recognition of the importance of such benefits.

## Judgement in Lausanne

The European Bridge League has received a 39 page judgement from the Court of Arbitration for Sport in a case brought by Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes. The players lodged an appeal against a decision rendered by the Disciplinary Commission of the EBL on 18 July 2016.

You can read the full Judgement at:

<http://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CAS-TAS-Decision-Fantoni-Nunes.pdf>



Extract from the Judgement dated 10 January 2018

"Taking all of the above into consideration, the majority of the Panel concludes that the exchange of information through the Code has not been proven to its comfortable satisfaction and rules that the appeal filed by the Players shall be upheld. Such conclusion does not mean that the Players are innocent of any wrongdoing, it only means that the EBL did not manage to prove to the comfortable satisfaction of the majority of the Panel that the Players committed an infraction of the EBL Rules. The Panel realizes how difficult it is for the EBL to establish the existence of a "code" between players, given the multiple possibilities of potential signs (moves, gestures, sounds, etc ...). However, sanctions cannot be imposed on the basis of incomplete evidence. The present decision does not mean that the system of control provided by the EBL Rules is invalid or that it cannot be used again. This decision is based on the evidence provided to the Panel in this particular case. Future investigations by the EBL, based on more consistent and reliable data, may lead to a different outcome than in the present matter.

"The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules that:

"The appeal filed by Messrs. Fulvio Fantoni & Claudio Nunes against the decision rendered by the Disciplinary Committee of the European Bridge League (EBL) on 18 July 2016 is upheld.

"The Decision rendered by the Disciplinary Committee of the European Bridge League (EBL) is set aside.

"The arbitration costs, to be determined by the CAS Court Office and notified separately to both the parties, shall be paid as follows: 20% of the costs by Messrs, Fulvio Fantoni & Claudio Nunes and 80% by the European Bridge League (EBL).

"The European Bridge League (EBL) is ordered to pay Messrs. Fulvio Fantoni & Claudio Nunes a total amount of CHF 2,000 as contribution towards the expenses incurred in connection with this arbitration procedure.

"All other motions or prayers for relief are dismissed."

I cannot resist referring to some lines from Oliver Twist (published in 1838).

When Mr. Bumble, the unhappy spouse of a domineering wife, is told in court that "...the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction", he replies:

"If the law supposes that," said Mr. Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, "the law is a ass - a idiot".

## Watching Brief

Founded by Terence Reese's Tournament Bridge Association, the Richard Lederer Memorial Cup was presented to the winners of the principal teams event at the TBA Spring Congress.

When the TBA was disbanded, the event was taken over by London CBA (now LMBA). Following the death of Richard Lederer's son Tony in 1976, the event was renamed the Lederer Memorial Trophy which was initially a competition for London Bridge Clubs.

In 1978 the event adopted the current format being an eight team invitational event and those now invited include national and international champions. This year's event will be staged at on February 24 & 25 at the RAC Club in Pall Mall London, starting at 12:00.

The RAC Club has a dress code which you can see at:

[https://www.royalautomobileclub.co.uk/data/useful\\_downloads/Member%20Dress%20Code%20Policy%202016\\_1.pdf](https://www.royalautomobileclub.co.uk/data/useful_downloads/Member%20Dress%20Code%20Policy%202016_1.pdf)

## On Trial

The composition of England's team to contest the European Championships in Ostend later this year is now known. Ten pairs played over four days for the right to join the pre-selected Tony Forrester and Andrew Robson. This is how they finished:

		X IMP
1	Jeffrey Allerton and Chris Jagger	110.50
2	David Bakhshi and Artur Malinowski	76.87
3	Michael Byrne and Kieran Dyke	61.25
4	Tom Townsend and Alex Hydes	14.13
5	Espen Erichsen and Glyn Liggins	14.12
6	Phil King and Andrew McIntosh	13.25
7	Neil Rosen and Martin Jones	-7.00
8	Simon Cope and Peter Crouch	-17.87
9	Frances Hinden and Graham Osborne	-88.00
10	Heather Dhondy and Brian Callaghan	-177.25

The top two pairs complete the team.

The Composition of the Women's Team is still to be determined. The EBU are holding a four-day trial for teams of four in March, with the winners being guaranteed a place on the team, where they will be joined by a pair chosen the selectors. Securing the right to represent your country does not come cheap - the entry fee is £150 per player and those who don't live in London will have a lot of additional expenses.



## Fantasy Island

You can read about one of the most original and intriguing tournaments of the year at:  
<https://playbridgeindelta.com/>

The Uzlina Bridge Cup is the first bridge contest in the Danube Delta and also the first bridge event that will have its own island for an entire weekend.

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## Test Your Technique

with *Christophe Grosset*

see *Page 31*

**Dealer North. None Vul.**

♠ 105  
 ♥ 53  
 ♦ J8732  
 ♣ AK108

♠ Q876  
 ♥ AKJ942  
 ♦ AKQ  
 ♣ —

The bidding proceeds as follows:

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

West leads the five of diamonds. How should you play?

# Sunshine State

*The Editor reports on the toughest team event of the year at the ACBL's Winter Nationals.*

Nestled in the corner of the country and surrounded by the beautiful Pacific Ocean and the Laguna and Cuyamaca mountains, the city of San Diego, eighth largest in the United States offers a delight of beauty, cultures and history. From your hotel window at the magnificent Grand Hyatt, you can see San Diego Bay, former home of the Portuguese tuna industry. You may even see U.S. Navy ships and historic Coronado Island. Just 15 miles south is the largest border crossing in the country at Tijuana, Mexico, home of the original Caesar salad. And the peninsula to the west jutting out into the Pacific is Point Loma, spotted by Spaniard Juan Cabrillo in 1542 as he sailed his ship up the southern shores of the continent—the “birth” of California. In 1769 Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá was built—the first Franciscan mission in California.

The Reisinger Board-a-Match Teams is a six-session open team-of-four event scored by board-a-match with two qualifying sessions, two semi-final sessions and two final sessions. It was contested as a four-session championship until 1966. The event is generally thought to be the toughest on the ACBL tournament calendar.

It employs Board-A-Match (BAM) scoring where instead of the more common “IMP” comparison (where, for example +620 at one table is compared with, say down 1, -100 at the other table for a 720-point swing converted to 12 IMPs), the BAM score is more rudimentary. The board is scored as either a “Win” a “Loss” or a “Tie”. If the N/S pair is +620 and the E/W pair at the other table is +100, the result is “1”—a full win. If a team is -800 East-West at one table and also -2,000 by the North-South pair at the other table, it is simply a loss or “0.” If both tables achieve the same score, say +170 at each table, it is a tie and 1/2 for each team. At the end of the session, each team adds up its ties and wins. If 26 boards are played, an average session is 13 points. Whoever gets the most points in the event is the winner.

You can win a board in BAM by the smallest of margins. If the N/S pair is +130 in a diamond partial, and their counterparts play in 2NT, making

120, they would get a full 1.0 on the board. If it were IMP scoring, this scenario would produce a nothing board—0 IMPs (since 0-10 on the IMP scale isn’t worth even 1 IMP).

Very few tournaments use this form of scoring, yet many experts consider it the “purest” form of the game. What is certain is that it is an easy form of scoring to understand, even for a non-player.

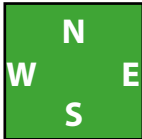
This form of scoring requires lots of stamina and concentration. You never know when a trick can be the difference between a win and a loss. At no moment can you let up, even though lots of the tricks won/lost will be totally irrelevant. If you are fighting hard for an overtrick in 2♥, but your counterparts are in 4♥, your result won’t matter (the board is already won or lost at the other table). Yet, the other table might be +120 on your cards and your effort to turn 110 into 140 will be worth everything!

The 48 teams who entered the lists were whittled down to the ten who would contest the final, playing two mini matches of three deals against each other, making average 30.00.

The finalists comprised a myriad assortment of World and National Champions—we can see how things unravelled thanks to BBO, who covered all ten tables through both sessions:

## Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ 1053	♠ KJ9872	♠ Q64
♥ AKJ3	♥ 6	♥ 72
♦ AQ32	♦ 976	♦ KJ5
♣ 43	♣ A107	♣ J8652



♠ A	♠ 109854
♥ Q	♥ 1084
♦ KQ9	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Kriegel</i>
–	–	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♠*	All Pass	

2♠ 6-9, non-forcing

I have never been a fan of the weak jump response, but it's a matter for the individual conscience.

East led the five of clubs and declarer won with dummy's king, cashed the ace of spades, came to hand with the ace of clubs and played the king of spades followed by the jack, claiming +110 when the suit divided.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Woolsey</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
–	–	Pass	1♥
1NT	2♠	2NT*	Pass
3♣	Double	All Pass	

2NT was described as being for takeout. Facing a strong balanced hand it seems to me that East's values are primarily defensive, but this form of scoring tempts people to bid  $-+110$  just beats  $+100$ .

North's double paid a rich dividend. He led the six of hearts and declarer took South's queen with the ace and played a club for the seven, eight and nine. North ruffed the return of the ten of hearts and switched to the jack of spades, South winning and playing the eight of hearts. North ruffed, cashed the king of spades and played a third spade, – 500.

In the match between Nickell & Pepsi Levin and Weinstein duplicated the result in the Open Room, but in the other room Brink & Drijver bid  $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$ .

Katz led the four of clubs and declarer won with the queen, unblocked the ace of spades, crossed to the ace of clubs, pitched a diamond on the king of spades and played a heart to the ten and jack. West exited with the ten of spades and declarer ruffed and played the queen of hearts, West winning with the king. At this point the play record stops, declarer taking eight tricks to flatten the board. What must have happened is that West played two diamonds and East won but failed to give his partner a club ruff.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/ydyunmgu) or <https://tinyurl.com/ydyunmgu>

## Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ K85  
♥ AJ108  
♦ AQ8  
♣ 843

♠ QJ743  
♥ 53  
♦ 109  
♣ J1096

♠ —  
♥ Q942  
♦ KJ753  
♣ KQ72

♠ A10962  
♥ K76  
♦ 642  
♣ A5

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Mahaffey</i>
–	–	1♦*	1♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

## 1♦ Precision

With an awkward lead East went for the two of hearts and declarer won with the eight, ran the jack and continued with the ten to dummy's king, West pitching the three of spades. When declarer continued with dummy's two of spades West followed with the four and declarer elected to play the king (putting in the eight affords an easy route to ten tricks). When East pitched the three of diamonds declarer was in trouble. He cashed the ace of hearts discarding a spade and played a club. If East puts up an honour declarer is doomed, but not seeing the danger East followed with the two and declarer won with dummy's ace and exited with a club. East overtook West's nine with the queen and cashed the king, but declarer was now in charge. West could win the fourth round of clubs and play a diamond, but declarer could take the ace and play a spade to the nine, endplaying West for +400.

♠ K85		♠ —
♥ AJ108		♥ Q942
♦ AQ8		♦ KJ753
♣ 843		♣ KQ72
♠ QJ743		
♥ 53		
♦ 109		
♣ J1096		
	<b>W N E</b>	
	<b>S</b>	
♠ A10962		
♥ K76		
♦ 642		
♣ A5		

and returning a diamond. Declarer won, ran the jack of hearts, played a heart to the nine and king and cashed two spades for an unnecessary but satisfying +460.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/y9j9rsbx) or <https://tinyurl.com/y9j9rsbx>

## Board 8. Dealer West. NoneVul.

♠ 1085		♠ Q9
♥ 3		♥ KQ102
♦ 1087		♦ AK652
♣ AKJ1085		♣ 43
♠ A62		
♥ A8764		
♦ J3		
♣ Q72		
	<b>W N E</b>	
	<b>S</b>	
♠ KJ743		
♥ J95		
♦ Q94		
♣ 96		

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Klukowski	Shen	Gawrys	Shao
—	—	1♦*	1♠
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♠
All Pass			
1♦ Polish Club			

Declarer won the club lead, cashed the ace of spades and played a spade for the jack and king. His next move was to run the jack of hearts which meant he was sure of eight tricks and if he plays a spade at this point he should come to nine. In practice he continued with the ten of hearts for the queen and king and when he played a third heart West ruffed and played a diamond, restricting declarer to +110.

In the match between Nickell & Bramley the bidding and result in the Closed Room was identical, but in the other room Levin & Weinstein reached 3NT. East led the three of diamonds and declarer won with the queen, played a spade to the ace, a spade for the jack and king and a spade, West winning with the queen (East parting with a heart and two clubs)

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Zhao	Levin	Liu	Weinstein
1♥	3♣	4♣*	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Once West opens the bidding reaching 4♥ is not an issue.

North started with three rounds of clubs and declarer pitched a spade from dummy, South's ruff being the last trick for the defence, +420.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Katz	Shen	Nickell	Shao
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

When West passed North's preemptive strike kept everyone quiet. East started with three rounds of diamonds, but -50 was a loss.

In the match between Schwartz & Demirev the result in the Closed Room was +420—once again West opened 1♥.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Marashev	Gold	Tsonchev	Schwartz
1♥	3♣	4♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

When West asked South if 3♣ was weak he said he hadn't seen it!

West led the jack of diamonds, ruffed the third round of the suit, cashed the ace of hearts and played a club. Declarer won with dummy's ace and ran the ten of spades to West's ace. He won the club exit with dummy's king, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart, ruffed a club, ruffed a heart and could claim for two down, -300 and a dramatic win.

In the encounter between Mahaffey and Coren, Gawrys & Klukowski reached 4♥. In the replay West passed and Lev opened 3♣. El Ahmady overcalled 3♦ and Sadek went on to 3NT. North led the king of clubs and switched to the eight of spades, ensuring one down.

You can replay this deal [here](http://tinyurl.com/y7le5crh) or <https://tinyurl.com/y7le5crh>

## Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 4	♠ AQ95	♠ K8
♥ 10764	♥ 9853	♥ AQ2
♦ 10984	♦ 72	♦ KJ
♣ J1095	♣ K63	♣ AQ8742
	♠ J107632	
	♥ KJ	
	♦ AQ653	
	♣ —	

♠ 1085	♠ AKJ1085	♠ Q9
♥ 3	♥ A8764	♥ KQ102
♦ 1087	♦ J3	♦ AK652
♣ 96	♣ Q72	♣ 43
	♠ KJ743	
	♥ J95	
	♦ Q94	
	♣ 96	

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Marashev	Shen	Tsonchev	Shao
–	–	1♣	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Declarer ruffed West's club lead, played a spade to the ace and a diamond to the queen. His only losers were the king of spades and the ace of hearts, +650.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Zhao	Demirev	Liu	Meltzer
–	–	2NT	All Pass

At every table where East opened 1♣ N/S breezed into 4♠, but where East started 2NT that ended the auction.

A spade lead meant declarer was booked for three down, but -300 was an easy win. There are not many hands where you might want to overcall a 2NT opening bid. If you are going to do that I suspect it might be best to use some conventional methods. There are some interesting observations at: <http://www.bridgebase.com/forums/topic/56020-defending-2nt-showing-minors/>

One possibility they don't mention is to use 3♣ to show hearts and another suit, with 3♦ promising spades and another suit.

This was perhaps the unluckiest result:

West	North	East	South
Woolsey	Pachtmann	Bramley	Zatorski
–	–	1♣	1♠
Pass	2♠	3♣	4♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

South led a spade and North won and switched to a diamond, but declarer's only other loser was a heart, so -500. Great against 4♠ – but in the replay East's 2NT opening was passed out.

You can replay this deal [here](http://tinyurl.com/y7owuzcc) or <https://tinyurl.com/y7owuzcc>



## Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 975	♠ QJ104	♠ AK82
♥ K843	♥ J52	♥ A
♦ 743	♦ AQ986	♦ K102
♣ 1092	♣ 5	♣ Q8743
	♠ 63	
	♥ Q10976	
	♦ J5	
	♣ AKJ6	



### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Klukowski</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Kriegel</i>
–	–	1♣*	1♥
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

1♣ Polish Club

I'm not sure about the meaning of 2♣ – it might have been heart support, a type of Drury or a transfer to diamonds with heart support.

West led the seven of spades and East played three rounds of the suit, declarer pitching a diamond as he won with dummy's queen and then playing on cross ruff lines, taking two top clubs, ruffing a club, cashing the ace of diamonds, ruffing a diamond and playing his last club. The defenders were helpless, + 530.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Woolsey</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Mahaffey</i>
–	–	1♣*	1♥
Pass	2♥	Double	All Pass

1♣ Strong

West's decision to convert the double was brave.

He led the ten of clubs and declarer won with the jack and now does best to play on spades, which should lead to an overtrick and a win.

He preferred to run the jack of diamonds and East won and played three rounds of spades, West following to the first two with the nine and seven, which persuaded declarer to ruff the third round with the ten of hearts. He ruffed a club and can now get home by cashing a diamond, ruffing a diamond and playing clubs, but he played the jack of hearts and East won and played the two of spades (he could have played anything) and West ruffed when declarer pitched a diamond and still had the master trump to come for one down.

Meanwhile, in the match between Schwartz and Shen, Shao had made 3♥ after a spade lead to the ace, East cashing the ace of hearts and then switching to a club by setting up a spade for a diamond discard and then playing on cross ruff lines.

### Open Room

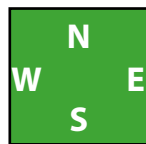
West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
–	–	1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
3♣	3♥	4♣	Double
All Pass			

South led the king of clubs and switched to the queen of hearts and declarer was hopelessly placed. He won and played three rounds of spades, South pitching the five of diamonds as North won and played the ace of diamonds and diamond. South ruffing as East put up the king. Now the ace of clubs followed by the jack would leave declarer with losers in spades and diamonds for -800, but South exited with a heart allowing declarer to get one of them away. Still, -500 was a loss.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/ycmoeskf) or <https://tinyurl.com/ycmoeskf>

## Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 98	♠ J 106	♠ KQ5432
♥ Q982	♥ J4	♥ 63
♦ 752	♦ QJ86	♦ 43
♣ K1085	♣ AQ74	♣ J96
	♠ A7	
	♥ AK1075	
	♦ AK109	
	♣ 32	



### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Stamatov	Levin	Danailov	Weinstein
Pass	Pass	1♠	Double
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠*	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

East led the king of spades and declarer won with dummy's ace, cashed the top hearts, ruffed a heart with the eight of diamonds, went to dummy with a diamond, ruffed a heart, drew trumps and claimed—he could set up a spade for a club discard, +920.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Katz	Gold	Nickell	Schwartz
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Double	Redouble
All Pass			

This is the sort of deal that makes a mockery of *Burn's Law of Total Trumps*. East led the king of spades (starting with a low spade saves a trick) and

declarer won with dummy's ace and played a club for the king and ace. He cashed the queen of clubs, ruffed a club and cashed four red suit winners. The ♠J10 were worth one more trick, +840—and a disappointing loss.

In the Diamond–Mahaffey encounter Lev and Mahaffey bid 1♦–(1♠)–2♥–2NT–3♦–Pass while in the other room Lindqvist and Brogeland reached 6♦ against silent opponents. East led the queen of spades (promising the jack or shortness) and West followed with the nine, in principle an odd number and probably discouraging. Declarer won in dummy and returned a spade, establishing the ten. East won and switched to a trump and declarer won with dummy's nine, cashed the ♥AK, played a club to the ace and pitched a club on the ten of spades, thereby introducing a new phrase into the nomenclature 'Timeo Poloniae et dona ferentes'.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/ycww6umy) or <https://tinyurl.com/ycww6umy>

## Board 18 Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q9	♠ A7532
♥ KQ62	♥ AJ97
♦ J10632	♦ Q8
♣ 72	♣ AQ
♠ K6	♠ J1084
♥ 8	♥ 10543
♦ A75	♦ K94
♣ KJ98654	♣ 103



### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Bercuson	Becker	Mittelman	Strul
–	–	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

North led the queen of hearts and declarer won with dummy's ace and played the queen of diamonds, ducking when South covered. He won the trump return in dummy, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a diamond and claimed, +920.

Notice that declarer did not try for seven by playing for 3-3 spades – he knew he was in a good spot.

	♠ Q9	
	♥ KQ62	
	♦ J10632	
	♣ 72	
♠ K6	<div>W N E S</div>	♠ A7532
♥ 8		♥ AJ97
♦ A75		♦ Q8
♣ KJ98654		♣ AQ
	♠ J1084	
	♥ 10543	
	♦ K94	
	♣ 103	

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sadek</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>El Ahmady</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>
–	–	1♠	Pass
1NT*	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass

1NT Forcing

North found the best lead of the jack of diamonds and when declarer played dummy's queen South's king was allowed to hold. South returned the nine of diamonds, but that meant that when declarer won and ran the clubs and cashed two spades North was inexorably squeezed in the red suits, +490 – but a loss.

Bramley and Woolsey also reached 6♣ – it was just as well as in the other room South led the four of diamonds against 3NT and North got squeezed for +520 – to win the board, while Diamond and Platnick tried 7♣ after 1♣\*-2♣-2♠-3♣-4♣-4♦\*-4♥\*-4♠\*-5NT\*-7♣, where 1♣ was strong, 4♥ showed three key-cards and 5NT promised the ♣Q. Declarer had to try to establish the spades, but the 4-2 split doomed him to defeat and a loss against the 3NT reached in the replay.

In Nickell-Schwartz both E/W pairs reached 4♠ – a fortuitous push.

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/yb5fgazs>

## Board 20. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠	—				
♥	QJ				
♦	AKQ9875				
♣	Q842				
♠	9765	<div>W</div> <div>N</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div>	♠	108432	
♥	K9872		♥	A1053	
♦	10		♦	J432	
♣	A96		♣	—	
♠	AKQJ				
♥	64				
♦	6				
♣	KJ10753				

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠*	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♦*	Pass	4♠*
Pass	5♣	All Pass	
3♠	Splinter		
4♦	Cue-bid		
4♠	Cue-bid		

After this revealing auction West led the seven of hearts and the defenders had three tricks, -100.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Platnick</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠*	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
All Pass			
3♠	Splinter		

Why South bid 6♣ is anybody's guess. Here too West put the seven of hearts on the table and that was two down for a loss.

Mind you, that was nothing compared to the effort of Smith and Kriegel, who bid 1♦-2♣-3♠\*-4♦-4♠-5♦\*-6♣-7♣-(Dble)-All Pass. 5♦ was apparently asking for key cards. Yes, it was a loss (5♣ down one at the other table).

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/ybtn7w8p>

## Board 23. Dealer South. All Vul.

	♠ A7632	
	♥ 653	
	♦ —	
	♣ A8753	
♠ Q	<div>W N E S</div>	♠ J10954
♥ 7		♥ KQ4
♦ KQJ108654		♦ 92
♣ KJ2		♣ 1096
	♠ K8	
	♥ AJ10982	
	♦ A73	
	♣ Q4	

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bercuson</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
—	—	—	1♥
5♦	5♥	All Pass	

West followed the principle of pre-empting to the level that he would like his opponents to play at.

West led the queen of spades and declarer won with the king, ruffed a diamond and played a heart to the ace—after that he had to go one down.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>
—	—	—	1♥
4♦	4♥	All Pass	

West led the king of diamonds and declarer ruffed, came to hand with a spade, ruffed a diamond and played a heart to the ace, +620 and a win.

Could anyone take 11 tricks in hearts?

When Diamond faced Bramley, Kriegel was in 4♥ after Diamond had overcalled 4♦. He won the spade lead in hand and played back a spade. West ruffed and switched to the king of diamonds. Declarer ruffed in dummy, played a heart to the jack, ruffed a diamond, pitched a club on the ace of spades and claimed eleven tricks and +450.

In the replay Woolsey overcalled 4♦, but then reopened with a double over 4♥. That was passed out and declarer won the spade lead in hand, ruffed a diamond and played a heart to the jack for +990.

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y7zlzngw>

## Board 26. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ AK64	<div>W<div>N</div>E<div>S</div></div>	♠ Q1052
♥ J76		♥ K1042
♦ 63		♦ AK5
♣ 9863		♣ J10
♠ J		
♥ AQ53		
♦ QJ1072		
♣ Q72		
♠ 9873		
♥ 98		
♦ 984		
♣ AK54		

Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Klukowski</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Schwartz</i>
—	—	1♣*	1♦
1♥*	2♦	2♠*	3♦
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

1♣ Polish

1♥ Spades

2♠ Four card support



West led the six of diamonds and East played three rounds of the suit (notice that with ♦AK5 you can choose which high card to play first, which might have some suit preference overtones). Declarer won with dummy's nine, took three rounds of clubs ending in dummy and then ran the eight of hearts, so he was two down,-500

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Lev</i>	<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Mahaffey</i>
–	–	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Double
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

Three Clubs was hopeless.

East led a club and declarer won in dummy and played the two of diamonds (playing a spade allows declarer to 'escape' for two down). East won and played another club and declarer won and played a diamond. East won and switched to the two of spades, West winning and returning a club which booked declarer for three down, -300.

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y8rbmtdp>

## Board 27. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ K7		♠ A53						
♥ AKJ753		♥ Q98						
♦ AKQ98		♦ 1062						
♣ —		♣ K954						
	<table><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	W	N	E		S		
W	N	E						
	S							
		♠ 982						
		♥ 102						
		♦ J543						
		♣ A1063						
		♠ QJ1064						
		♥ 64						
		♦ 7						
		♣ QJ872						

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>
–	–	–	2♠*
4♦*	4♠	5♦	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

2♠ Spades and a minor, 5+4+

4♦ Leaping Michaels

North cashed the ace of spades – the last trick for the defence, +920.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Bercusson</i>	<i>Shen</i>	<i>Mittelman</i>	<i>Shao</i>
–	–	–	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2♦*	2♠
3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

It would have cost West nothing to jump to 6♦ over 4♥, offering a choice of slams.

North led the ace of spades for a win.

As an aside, suppose North had bid  $4\clubsuit$  over  $3\heartsuit$ , which must imply support for spades.

That would create the possibility of a save in 6♠—and that will cost at most -800.

Not everyone reached a slam – Klukowski-Gawrys stopped in 4♥ (after West had bid 3♠ over 2♠ and then rebid 4♥ when North doubled) as did Danailov-Stamatov who bid 1♣\*-1♦\*-1♥-1♠-3♦-4♣\*-4♥. That was a Precision auction – and the response of 1♦ would have wrong sided the contract – as Woolsey and Bramley discovered when South led the queen of spades against 6♦. Declarer later took a heart finesse to go two down – but they survived as Sadek and El Ahmaday reached 6♥ by East, the bidding having started 2♣\*-2♥\* – that showed two controls.

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y8q4f9ct>

At the end of the session this is how things stood:

John Diamond, Brian Platnick, Boye Brogeland, Espen Lindqvist	18.48
Jacek Pszczola, Josef Blass, Jacek Kalita, Michal Nowosadzki, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver	17.81
George Mittelman, Ken Bercuson, Ron Pachtmann, Piotr Pawel Zatorski	17.50
Yuxiong Shen, Zijian Shao, Jack Zhao, Yinghao Liu	16.85
Bart Bramley, Kit Woolsey, Oren Kriegel, Ron Smith	15.00
Nikolay Demirev, Rose Meltzer, Vladimir Marashev, Ivan Tsonchev, Rosen Gunev, Kalin Karaivanov	14.56
Jim Mahaffey, Sam Lev, Michael Rosenberg, Roger Lee, Piotr Gawrys, Michal Klukowski	12.75
Richard Coren, Michael Becker, Aubrey Strul, Michael Kamil, Tarek Sadek, Walid Elahmady	12.66
Richard Schwartz, David Gold, Michael Bell, Jerry Stamatov, Diyan Danailov	10.64
Frank Nickell, Ralph Katz, Steve Weinstein, Robert Levin, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell	9.94

Anything is possible in Board-a-Match (a few years ago in one of the Nationals the Rabbi's team won 20 boards in a row) but in such a powerful field the smart money suggested that the winners would be one of the top four.

## Board 2. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ A106		♠ Q875
♥ QJ93		♥ 4
♦ KJ865		♦ 73
♣ K		♣ QJ10842
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>S</span> </div> </div>	♠ KJ42 ♥ A5 ♦ 94 ♣ 97653
		♠ 93
		♥ K108762
		♦ AQ102
		♣ A

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Woolsey</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Brink</i>
–	–	Pass	1♥
2♦	All Pass		

North led his heart and declarer went up with dummy's ace and played the nine of diamonds. Because West has overcalled on a five-card suit the best defence is to go up with the ace, cash the king of hearts and play a third heart, enabling North to score a ruff with the seven of diamonds, but no doubt expecting West to have an extra diamond South played low and declarer put in the jack. When it held he exited with a diamond and South won, cashed the king of hearts and exited with a heart. Declarer won, cashed the ace of spades and then ran the ten and exited with a diamond. South won and played a heart, but declarer won and played another diamond. South could win and cash the ace of clubs, but declarer had the rest, +90.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Kalita	Smith	Nowosadzki	Kriegel
–	–	Pass	1♥
1NT	Pass	2♦*	Double
Redouble All Pass			
	2♦	Spades	

When West asked about the meaning of South's double he was told 'no agreement. When North enquired about the meaning of the redouble East's answer was rou

South led the eight of hearts and declarer won with dummy's nine and played the three of hearts, North ruffing and switching to the four of clubs. South took the ace and returned the nine of spades, covered by the ten, queen and king. Declarer ruffed a club and played the queen of hearts, ruffed by North with the seven of diamonds and overruffed with dummy's nine, declarer ruffing a club, ruffing a heart and ruffing a club. South had pitched two spades, so declarer could not score another trick in that suit, but he was still certain to collect his eighth trick with the ♦K, +560 and a win.

In the match between Diamond and Mahaffey, Lee & Rosenberg bid 1♥-1NT-2♦-3♣ which had to go two down after a diamond lead.

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Klukowski</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	–	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	3♣	Double	All Pass

East led the four of diamonds (low from a doubleton) and West took dummy's queen with the king and switched to the ten of spades for the queen and king. Declarer took the diamond return with dummy's ace and played the nine of spades (cashing the ace of clubs is best as the cards lie) and West took the ace and now does best to play a third spade which should lead to -800. He preferred the jack of diamonds and East pitched a heart as

♠ A106  
♥ QJ93  
♦ KJ865  
♣ K

♠ Q875  
♥ 4  
♦ 73  
♣ QJ10842

♠ KJ42  
♥ A5  
♦ 94  
♣ 97653

♠ 93  
♥ K108762  
♦ AQ102  
♣ A

W N E S

declarer ruffed with the jack of clubs. Paying no heed to the Rabbi's Rule declarer played a heart (a club to the ace allows declarer to pitch a heart on the ♦10 for two down) taken by East's ace and now a club ensured a three trick penalty, -800.

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y86tbo2n>

## Board 6. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J87  
♥ A  
♦ KQ42  
♣ KQ1053

♠ AQ109654  
♥ K10974  
♦ 8  
♣ —

♠ 3  
♥ J82  
♦ AJ10976  
♣ 974

♠ K2  
♥ Q653  
♦ 53  
♣ AJ862

W N E S

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Marashev</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Tsonchev</i>
—	—	2♦	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

North cashed the ace of hearts and switched to the king of diamonds. Declarer won with dummy's ace, played a spade to the queen, cashed the ace and could claim, losing only to the jack of spades and the ♥Q.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Kariavanov</i>	<i>Shen</i>	<i>Gunev</i>	<i>Shao</i>
–	–	2♦	Pass
2♠	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

East led the ten of diamonds and declarer won with the king, cashed two clubs ending in dummy and played the two of spades. West took the queen and ace and exited with a spade and the best declarer could do was cash his winners for one down.

Not every player was able to start with a weak 2♦:

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Woolsey</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦*
1♠	2♠*	Pass	2NT
3♥	3NT	Pass	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4♥	Double

## All Pass

- 1♦ RM Precision
- 2♠ Game forcing with 4+♣
- 4♣ Pick a major

North led the queen of clubs (any other suit and declarer would be in clover) and declarer ruffed, played a diamond to the ace, a spade to the queen, ruffed a spade and advanced the jack of hearts, putting up the king when South followed impassively with the three. North won and played the ten of clubs and declarer ruffed with the nine of hearts and played the ace of spades, South ruffing when declarer discarded a club (ruffing with dummy's ♥8 saves a trick) cashing the queen of hearts and playing a club which meant four down, -1100.

Knowing that he was sure to be forced in clubs do you think West should have run to  $4\spadesuit$ ?

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Levin</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Kriegel</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Play followed that at Zhao's table, +620.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/y9vrs3t8) or <https://tinyurl.com/y9vrs3t8>

## Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ K32  
♥ A85  
♦ Q752  
♣ KQ10

♠ AQ7654  
♥ 4  
♦ J1083  
♣ 83

W N E S

♠ 10  
♥ KJ76  
♦ A4  
♣ AJ9742

♠ J98  
♥ Q10932  
♦ K96  
♣ 65

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	1NT*	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2♦*	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3♦*	Pass	3♥*
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦*
Pass	5♣*	Pass	6♣

All Pass

- 1NT 14-16  
 3♣ 6+in aminor, then 3♦=MAJ SPL (2♦) or F raise (2M).  
 3♦ Relay  
 3♥ 6+♣  
 4♦ RKCB  
 5♣ 2 key cards +♣Q

West led the ace of spades and continued with the queen. Declarer's losing diamond went on the ♠K and he played a diamond to the ace, a club to the king and a diamond, ruffing as East played the king. a club to the queen was followed by the queen of diamonds and declarer then ran the clubs before playing on hearts for +920.

You will have spotted that a diamond lead is the one that beats the contract—not easy to find at this form of scoring.



## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levin	Gold	Weinstein	Bell
–	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

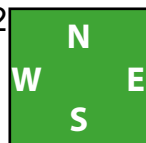
East led the eight of spades and when West put in the queen, declarer won with the king and played six rounds of clubs, throwing two spades and a heart and continued with a heart to the ace and heart. East was down to ♠9 ♥Q109 ♦K6, but declarer rejected the finesse and took only ten tricks.

In the match involving Demirev and Coren twelve tricks were taken in 3NT at both tables – Marashev after a spade lead to the ace and spade, East being squeezed in the red suits via a Vienna Coup. In the other room the bidding went 1♦-(1♥!)-2♣-3♣-3NT and West led the six of spades. When declarer played low from dummy East won with the jack and returned a spade, but when West held up his ace East was squeezed. Thank you partner!

You can replay the deals [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/y7vcklpj>

### Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ —		
♥ J1096		
♦ K9843		
♣ Q987		
♠ AQ105432	♠ K	
♥ 5	♥ 8743	
♦ 75	♦ AQJ6	
♣ AK2	♣ 10654	
♠ J9876		
♥ AKQ2		
♦ 102		
♣ J3		



## Open Room

West	North	East	South
Klukowski	Kamil	Gawrys	Coren
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
2♠	3♥	3♠	All Pass

I suspect most of you will be familiar with *Meckstroth's Law*: 'When partner freely supports your six-card major, bid game'. When Gawrys found what Skid Simon might have described as a *Master Bid* Klukowski broke the law in spades (pun intended) by not going on to game.

It reminded me of one of the many anecdotes involving Fred Trueman, the first bowler to take 300 wickets in Test cricket.

After dismissing a young player, the ousted batsman had the good grace to respond

"That was a very good ball Fred."

Trueman replied "Aye, and it was wasted on you."

North led the jack of hearts and South won with the ace and returned the queen. Declarer ruffed, took a diamond finesse, ruffed a heart, cashed the top clubs, played a spade to the king, ruffed a heart, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a diamond and exited with a club, claiming eleven tricks.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Sadek	Rosenberg	El Ahmady	Lee
–	–	–	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

West led the ace of clubs and switched to a heart and declarer won in dummy and played a club to the jack and king. West returned a club and declarer pitched a diamond on dummy's queen and ruffed a club, West pitching a spade. The ten of diamonds went to the king and ace and East returned a heart. Declarer, running out of ammunition, claimed three more tricks via the high cross ruff for -50.

Suppose declarer wins the first trump in hand and plays a club, West winning and exiting with a club. Declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a club

high and runs the ten of diamonds. East wins and exits with a trump, but declarer wins in dummy, plays the king of diamonds covered and ruffed, ruffs a spade, cashes dummy's remaining hearts and exits with the nine of diamonds. East wins, but will have to give a diamond trick to dummy.

More than one pair reached 4♠ – but that was where South declined to open.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/y8bcs5w7) or <https://tinyurl.com/y8bcs5w7>

## Board 14. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ KQ743	♠ 95	♠ A10862
♥ 7	♥ Q984	♥ K1032
♦ 104	♦ A63	♦ J92
♣ KQJ93	♣ A1064	♣ 5
	♠ J	
	♥ AJ65	
	♦ KQ875	
	♣ 872	



## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sadek</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>El Ahmady</i>	<i>Kriegel</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦
1♠	Double	3♦*	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

3♦ Spade support

North led the five of spades and declarer won with dummy's ace and played the five of clubs, for the two, nine and ten. Seeing no danger, North exited with a spade and declarer won in hand and played the king of clubs – check-mate. He could ruff out North's ace, come to hand with a trump and pitch all dummy's diamonds, +420.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Woolsey</i>	<i>Kamil</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Coren</i>
–	–	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

North led the eight of hearts and when declarer put up dummy's king South took the ace and returned the six. Declarer ruffed and tried the queen of clubs but North pounced on that with the ace and switched to the ace of diamonds and a diamond for a win.

Mittelman was up against Shen in this round. Bercuson and Mittleman reached 4♠ but North led a heart and the defenders made no mistake, South switching to the king of diamonds at trick two, -50.

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Pachtmann</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Zatorski</i>
–	–	Pass	1♦
1♠	Double*	4♠	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

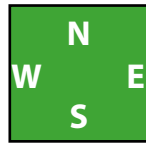
North led the five of spades and declarer won in hand with the king and played a heart for the king and ace, South returning a heart. Declarer ruffed and played the queen of clubs. North won and exited 'safely' with his remaining spade. Declarer won with the queen and could claim the remaining tricks, a remarkable +690.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/yd9mw4pu) or <https://tinyurl.com/yd9mw4pu>

The opportunity for immortality at bridge does not come along very often.

## Board 16. Dealer West. E/W Vul.

♠ 543	♠ AJ10987	♠ K6
♥ AQ	♥ J63	♥ K9754
♦ J108642	♦ AK3	♦ Q97
♣ Q6	♣ K	♣ 1095
	♠ Q2	
	♥ 1082	
	♦ 5	
	♣ AJ87432	



### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Zhao	Smith	Liu	Kriegel
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT*
2♦	2♠	3♦	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

I confess I see little merit in bidding on the West hand – ‘for the lead, partner’.

East led the seven of diamonds and declarer won, unblocked the king of clubs, ruffed a diamond, cashed the ace of clubs pitching a heart and then ran the queen of spades. Although that lost the contract was safe, +420.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Woolsey	Shen	Bramley	Shao
Pass	1♣*	Pass	1♦*
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠

All Pass

1♣ Precision

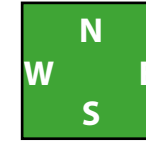
1♦ Negative

East led the four of hearts and West won with the ace and returned the

queen. To defeat the contract East must overtake and give his partner a ruff.

*(Just in case you have not seen it before, here is the famous precedent from a match between the Dallas Aces and the Blue Team:*

♠ A95	♠ J10873	♠ KQ
♥ J82	♥ AQ109764	♥ 53
♦ J864	♦ —	♦ 953
♣ J62	♣ 8	♣ AK9753
	♠ 642	
	♥ K	
	♦ AKQ1072	
	♣ Q104	



In both rooms the contract was Four Hearts by North, East-West remaining silent throughout the auction. The play to the first three tricks was the same. East led the king of clubs, saw West's two, and switched to the king of spades. West encouraged with the nine of spades and the queen of spades followed. Thereafter, in the closed room, Belladonna was in command, dummy's diamonds taking care of the three losing spades.

With the spades blocked, could the result be any different in the open room? Commentators and audience alike expected a flat board. Forquet took his time before playing to that third trick. Then, making up his mind, he overtook the queen of spades and gave Garozzo a ruff!

Forquet reasoned that, since Garozzo knew the club position after seeing the two, he would have cashed his ace of clubs had there been room for declarer to have another club. So, somehow, the defence had to take three tricks in spades, and it was significant that Garozzo, knowing that Forquet had the ace of spades, led the queen of spades and not a low one. Maybe, of course, he had the jack of spades too. But, maybe he had started with a doubleton. It was a chance and Pietro Forquet was quick to seize it.)

If East had reasoned this way he might have found the play of overtaking – and given his partnership a shot at the defence of the year.

Weinstein found the heart lead – but Levin switched to a trump at trick

two and Rosenberg put up the ace and took his discard (Meckwell could only reach  $3\clubsuit$  in the other room after  $1\clubsuit^*-1\diamondsuit^*-1\spadesuit-3\clubsuit$ ).

You can replay this deal [here](#) or <https://tinyurl.com/ybj6mel>

## Board 21. Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ K96		♠ 3
♥ AQ9843		♥ 1075
♦ KQ9		♦ 864
♣ 10		♣ AJ9742
	<div>W N E S</div>	
		♠ AJ852
		♥ K
		♦ AJ107
		♣ Q63
		♠ Q1074
		♥ J62
		♦ 532
		♣ K85

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Zhao</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>	<i>Liu</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♠	All Pass		
4♦ Cue-bid			
4♥ Cue-bid			
5♥ Cue-bid			

South led the eight of clubs and North won with the ace and switched to the eight of diamonds. Declarer won in dummy, cashed the king of spades and continued with the six—two down when the spade position was revealed.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Levin</i>	<i>Shen</i>	<i>Weinstein</i>	<i>Shao</i>
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♥*	Pass	5♠	All Pass
4♦ Cue-bid			
4♥ Cue-bid			
4NT RKCB			
5♥ 2 key cards, no ♠Q			

South led the five of diamonds and declarer won with dummy's king, cashed the king of spades and continued with the nine. When North pitched the seven of clubs declarer took the ace, unblocked the ♥K, crossed to dummy with a diamond and played three rounds of hearts, disposing of his losing clubs, +450.

When Pepsi met Coren Kalita & Nowosadzki got up to 5♠ and South led a club, North winning and switching to a diamond. That led to one down when declarer played the king of spades followed by the nine.

## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Sadek</i>	<i>Drijver</i>	<i>El Ahmady</i>	<i>Brink</i>
–	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣*	Double	Pass*	Pass
5♦*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		
4♦	Cue-bid		
4♥	Cue-bid		
5♣	Cue-bid		
Pass	Denies first round club control		
5♦	Denies first round club control		
5♥	Cue-bid		



Knowing that his partner would not cue-bid in hearts with a shortage West placed him with the king. When the 38.75% chance that the suit would play for no loser materialised that was +980.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/ya4woxt4) or <https://tinyurl.com/ya4woxt4>

## Board 22. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ J3		
♥ KQ42		
♦ QJ109		
♣ J63		
♠ A972		♠ 1064
♥ J87		♥ A9653
♦ A83		♦ K2
♣ 1075		♣ 984
		♠ KQ85
		♥ 10
		♦ 7654
		♣ AKQ2



## Open Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Danailov</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣*
Pass	1♦*	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	
1♣ 2+♣			
1♦ Hearts			

East led the five of hearts and declarer took West's jack with the king and played the jack of spades. West won and returned the eight of hearts, the defenders taking the next six tricks via four hearts and two diamonds for -50.

## Closed Room

West	North	East	South
<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Platnick</i>	<i>Bell</i>
–	–	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

Here East led the ten of spades and declarer won with the jack (West following with the seven) played a club to the ace and a diamond for the queen and king. A heart switch now is still enough to defeat 1NT, but East played the six of spades and West took dummy's king with the ace and returned the jack of hearts. When declarer put up the queen East won (ducking saves a trick) and returned a heart. Declarer ducked, and West, realising the game was up, cashed the ace of diamonds, declarer claiming +120.

In the match between Shen and Mahaffey, Shao and Shen bid 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♦ and lost only two trumps and the major suit aces for +130, an easy win, as Liu, defending 1NT, led a spade, but switched to a heart when he came in with the king of diamonds, giving Rosenberg no chance.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/yceyb2vx) or <https://tinyurl.com/yceyb2vx>

When the last round started these were the leading positions:

Shen	29.85
Pepsi	29.31
Mittelman	28.50
Diamond	27.98

Mittelman was playing Diamond while Pepsi was up against Demirev and Shen was taking on Schwartz.

Mittelman scored a win and two draws to finish on 30.50. Meanwhile, Shen was splitting the points for a total of 31.35. Could Pepsi score 2.5 and snatch victory?

## Board 25. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ 432	♠ KQJ98	♠ 7
♥ Q2	♥ AKJ73	♥ 9854
♦ Q10	♦ 973	♦ AK864
♣ AK7632	♣ —	♣ J84

♠ A1065	♠ 7
♥ 106	♥ 9854
♦ J52	♦ AK864
♣ Q1095	♣ J84



### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Sadek	Rodwell	El Ahmady	Meckstroth
—	2♣*	Pass	2♦*
3♣*	Pass	4♥	5♣
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

- 2♣ RM Precision
- 2♦ Looking for a major
- 3♣ Majors

East led the ace of diamonds and switched to the seven of spades. There was nothing declarer could do – he had to lose two tricks in every suit apart from trumps, -800.

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Levin	Kamil	Weinstein	Coren
—	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	2♣	Double*	4♣
4♥	All Pass		

Declarer ruffed the club lead, cashed the ace of hearts, crossed to dummy with a diamond and played a spade to the king. When it held he played two rounds of diamonds and was soon able to claim twelve tricks.

This auction is from the match between Demirev and Pepsi:

West	North	East	South
Karaivanov	Drijver	Gunev	Brink
—	1NT*	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Double	3♣*	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4♦*	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT*	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5♦*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

1NT	10-12
2♣	Majors
3♣	Game forcing
4♣	Equal length, slam try
4♦	Cue-bid

It seems clear the bids of 4NT, 5♣ and 5♦ were conventional, but their precise meaning is unclear (and I confess I am guessing to some extent about the preceding bids). Declarer ruffed the club lead and played the jack of spades, South winning and returning a club. Declarer ruffed, cashed the top hearts and then played spades. Eventually the ten of spades was ruffed out, the ♠9 providing the parking place for the last losing diamond. They needed to bid it as their teammates had conceded 800 in 5♣ doubled.

That Pepsi also lost the other two deals no longer mattered.

You can replay this deal [here](https://tinyurl.com/y9ntw87r) or <https://tinyurl.com/y9ntw87r>



**Winners the Reisinger Trophy: Yinghao Liu, Jack Zhao, Yuxiong Shen, ACBL President Bob Heller presenting trophy, npc Jianhua Miao and Zijian Shao.**

This is how the table looked at the end:

Yuxiong Shen, Zijian Shao, Jack Zhao, Yinghao Liu	31.35
George Mittelman, Ken Bercuson, Ron Pachtmann, Piotr Pawel Zatorski	30.50
Jacek Pszczola, Josef Blass, Jacek Kalita, Michal Nowosadzki, Sjoert Brink, Bas Drijver	29.31
John Diamond, Brian Platnick, Boye Brogeland, Espen Lindqvist	28.98
Nikolay Demirev, Rose Meltzer, Vladimir Marashev, Ivan Tsonchev, Rosen Guneev, Kalin Karaivanov	28.56
Richard Schwartz, David Gold, Michael Bell, Jerry Stamatov, Diyan Danailov	27.64
Bart Bramley, Kit Woolsey, Oren Kriegel, Ron Smith	27.50
Jim Mahaffey, Sam Lev; Michael Rosenberg, Roger Lee, Piotr Gawrys, Michal Klukowski	26.75
Frank Nickell, Ralph Katz, Steve Weinstein, Robert Levin, Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell	25.44
Richard Coren, Michael Becker, Aubrey Strul, Michael Kamil, Tarek Sadek, Walid Elahmady	25.16

For the record, Schwartz had won the second session with 17.00, followed by Nickell with 15.50 and then came the 14.50 of the 2017 Reisinger Champions.

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## Women's & Seniors' Pairs

**will be played in Ostend before the  
54th European Bridge Team Championships**



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**WOMEN'S PAIRS:** Open to All WOMEN'S pairs registered and of good standing in their EBL NBO (Zone 1)

**SENIORS' PAIRS:** Open to All SENIOR pairs (i.e. players born in or before 1957) who are registered and of good standing in their EBL NBO (Zone 1)

**TEAMS:** Qualification from EBL NBO (Zone 1)

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# Misplay These Hands With Me

## Role Reversal

As the years take their toll one finds that one's role in a team is frequently reduced to that of board carrier. During an early round of the Gold Cup a member of my squad is indisposed, offering me a rare opportunity. We are well ahead when towards the end with only our side vulnerable I pick up this hand with potential:

♠ AKJ8532  
♥ AJ3  
♦ KQ  
♣ J

West and my partner pass, but East produces the stop card and follows it with 4♥. I overcall 4♠ and West considers for a moment before doubling, leaving us with this auction:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	4♥	4♠
Double	All Pass		

West leads the eight of hearts and I get a dummy with a few assets:

♠ 7  
♥ 10  
♦ J109542  
♣ A10874  
  
♠ AKJ8532  
♥ AJ3  
♦ KQ  
♣ J

I win the opening lead with the ace, ruff a heart, cash the ace of clubs and ruff a club. When I cash a top trump both defenders follow. I play the king of diamonds and West wins and returns the suit, East following. It won't

help to play a high trump, but I may be able to force West to assist me. I exit with a low trump and West wins (East discarding a heart) and returns the nine of clubs to his partner's queen. I ruff, cash the king of spades and exit with a spade, but West wins and plays the king of clubs so I have to give East the last trick. This was the layout:

♠ 7		♠ 4
♥ 10		♥ KQ97654
♦ J109542		♦ 63
♣ A10874		♣ Q62
♠ Q1096		♠ AKJ8532
♥ 82		♥ AJ3
♦ A87		♦ KQ
♣ K943		♣ J

	♠ N	
♠ W		♠ E
	♠ S	

## Post mortem

Like so many hands this one could have been made by better timing; declarer should play a club to the ace at trick two, then ruff a club. A heart ruff is followed by another club ruff. Then declarer plays as before, but the difference is that West can only exit once in clubs and will eventually have to surrender a trick to dummy.

That West can defeat the contract by leading a trump at trick one, then taking the ace of diamonds and switching to a low club merely serves to illustrate what an impossible game bridge is.



## Be it ever so Humble

Playing in a minor team event, with both sides vulnerable I pick up the following:


♠ AK2  
♥ 8543  
♦ AKJ7  
♣ 105

After two passes East opens 1♥ and West responds 1♠. My partner now enters from the wings with 1NT and East raises to 2♠. Taking my partner's call to show the minors I cannot bid less than 5♦, which ends the auction.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	1NT	2♠	5♦
All Pass			

West leads the four of diamonds and dummy is about what I expected:

♠ 105  
♥ 10  
♦ Q9863  
♣ A9863




♠ AK2  
♥ 8543  
♦ AKJ7  
♣ 105

The trump lead is annoying. Without it I could have played for a cross ruff, aiming to score eight trump tricks and three outside winners. Perhaps I can make something of the clubs. I win in hand and play a club to the ace and a club. East follows with the jack, but then discards the ace of hearts. West wins and switches to a heart, East winning with the jack and returning a second trump. I take that in hand as West follows.

I cross ruff hearts and clubs, but nothing good happens and I have to lose a trick at the end to go one down. This was the full deal:

♠ 105  
♥ 10  
♦ Q9863  
♣ A9863

♠ J964  
♥ 76  
♦ 104  
♣ KQ742



♠ AK2  
♥ 8543  
♦ AKJ7  
♣ 105

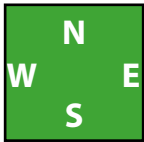
♠ Q873  
♥ AKQJ92  
♦ 52  
♣ J

## Post mortem

Declarer should take the second trump in dummy and ruff a club. He then crossruffs to reach this position:

♠ 105  
♥ —  
♦ 9  
♣ 9

♠ J96  
♥ —  
♦ —  
♣ K



♠ AK2  
♥ 8  
♦ —  
♣ —

♠ Q87  
♥ K  
♦ —  
♣ —

When the last trump is played East must discard a spade. Having done its work the eight of hearts is released and West also has to discard a spade. So, the last trick goes to the two of spades.

# Deals that Caught My Eye

David Bird looks at some England boards from the European Champions Cup.

The 2017 European Champions Cup featured the champion teams of the top 10 European nations, plus the holders (Monaco I) and the host nation (Latvia). We will look at some big swing hands from England's matches in the round robin. As always, our purpose will be constructive—to diagnose how and why these swings arose.

RR1. England vs. Latvia. Board 7. Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ 6			
♥ 4			
♦ K82			
♣ QJ987432			
♠ AQ10853		♠ K74	
♥ 32		♥ 986	
♦ J953		♦ Q1074	
♣ K		♣ A106	
		♠ J92	
		♥ AKQJ1075	
		♦ A6	
		♣ 5	

West	North	East	South
Lorencs	Gold	Rubins	Bell
—	—	—	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Michael Bell's 3NT showed a good pre-empt in one of the majors. David Gold's 4♣ response asked partner to transfer into his long suit. East led the ♦7 against the heart game, Gold winning with dummy's ace. When he called for the ♠9, West rose with the ♠A and returned a trump, preventing a spade ruff. Gold then ran dummy's trumps, arriving at this position:

♠ —			
♥ —			
♦ K8			
♣ QJ9			
♠ Q10		♠ K4	
♥ —		♥ —	
♦ J9		♦ Q10	
♣ K		♣ A	
		♠ J2	
		♥ 5	
		♦ 6	
		♣ 5	

What should West discard on dummy's ♥5? If he throws the ♠10, blocking the defenders' suit, declarer can set up and enjoy a club trick in dummy. West did not fall into this trap, discarding the ♣K instead. Declarer threw the ♣9 and it was now East's turn to think. If he throws the ♠4, he will be thrown in with a club and have to concede two tricks to the dummy. The defenders remained on the required tightrope when Rubins (East) discarded the ♠K. Well done. Their next test came when the ♣5 was led from dummy. What should West throw?

The winning discard was a diamond, but Lorencs released the ♠10. East won with the bare ♣A and played a spade to West's bare ♠Q. Dummy then had the game-going tricks with the ♦K and a good club. +620.

West	North	East	South
Bakhshi	Niemanis	Forrester	Rubenis
—	—	—	1♥
2♠	Pass	3♥	4♥
4♠	5♣	Pass	5♥
All Pass			

After a diamond lead and a club to West's king, Bakhshi played a second diamond. Declarer conceded a spade, won the trump return and had to go two down. It was 13 IMPs to Allfrey (England).

RR5. England vs. Germany. Board 15. Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ AJ10864	
	♥ QJ	
	♦ 93	
	♣ QJ9	
♠ 95	<div>W N E S</div>	♠ 3
♥ 98		♥ A107632
♦ AKQ106542		♦ J7
♣ 6		♣ K742
	♠ KQ72	
	♥ K54	
	♦ 8	
	♣ A10853	

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Welland</i>
–	–	–	1♣
3NT	Double	All Pass	

Other players might see the West hand as a 3NT overcall, but how many would pass when this contract was doubled? Peter Crouch, a text commentator on BBO, summed it up well with: ‘One thing you have to say about West, he has ....’.

So, Sabine Auken now had a critical opening lead to find. West was likely to hold a club stopper and good diamonds. On that basis her choice was between the ♠A, to look at dummy and see a signal from partner, and the ♥Q. A heart lead would work well if South held the ♥A and could then lead through declarer’s ♠K. A nett swing of 29 IMPs hung in the balance.

Sabine Auken led the ♥Q! That was 550 to Allfrey (England) instead of 1700 to Munchen I (Germany). At the other table Kasimir (West) overcalled 5♦ and was doubled for two down and a 300 penalty.

Another deal from the same match confirmed Peter Crouch’s assessment:

RR5. England vs. Germany. Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ J10432	
	♥ 43	
	♦ K984	
	♣ Q5	
♠ A96	<div>W N E S</div>	♠ —
♥ QJ762		♥ AK985
♦ —		♦ Q1065
♣ K9876		♣ AJ104
	♠ KQ875	
	♥ 10	
	♦ AJ732	
	♣ 32	

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Auken</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Welland</i>
–	–	1♥	2♥
2♠	4♠	5♣	Pass
7♥	All Pass		


Roy Welland led a hopeful ♦A, ruffed in the dummy. Alexander Allfrey then drew trumps, finding the Michaels bidder with only one. North’s vulnerable 4♠ raise placed him with five spades, so a club finesse through North would be necessary only if South’s shape was 5-1-6-1. Allfrey led a cost-nothing ♣J, rising with dummy’s ♣K. He was then spared any guess when North’s ♣Q appeared on the second round. The reward was +1510.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kasimir</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Jokish</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	–	1♥	2♥
4♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Presumably West’s 6♥ showed one ace and a void in the splinter suit, diamonds. East could see how to dispose of his diamond losers (one discard and three ruffs) but was not willing to gamble on the lie of the club suit. He passed 6♥ and it was another 11 IMPs to England.

On our next deal England face the holders, Monaco I. Both West players end in 6♥ and the opening lead is the same. Suppose for a moment that you have £10 to spare. Which declarer would you back to make the contract, Geir Helgemo or Andrew Robson?

RR8. England vs. Monaco 1.Board 11. Dealer South. Neither Vul.

	♠ 765		
	♥ K95		
	♦ 1082		
	♣ Q974		
♠ 10		♠ AKQ3	
♥ Q76432		♥ A108	
♦ Q		♦ AJ764	
♣ KJ865		♣ A	
	♠ J9842		
	♥ J		
	♦ K953		
	♣ 1032		
			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Multon</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Zimmermann</i>
–	–	–	2♠
Pass	3♣	Double	3♦
4♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Robson won the ♠5 lead in dummy and cashed the ♥A, the jack appearing from South. Another trump at this stage would result in defeat, since North could win and return a third trump. Robson played two more top spades, throwing clubs, and continued with the ♦A and ♣A. Reaching his hand with a diamond ruff, he played the ♣K and ruffed his last club, the jack, with the ♥8. With only ♥Q764 remaining in his hand, he called for dummy's ♥10 and claimed the slam.

If you invested your precious tenner on Helgemo, perhaps you are feeling nervous at this stage.

West	North	East	South
Helgemo	Gold	Helness	Bell
–	–	–	2♦
2♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass

Gold led the ♠5, won in the dummy, and Helgemo played ace and another diamond, ruffing with the ♥2. After a trump to the ace, he played the ♠Q and ditched a club. All followed to a second diamond ruff. To make the slam after this start, declarer needed to play a club to the ace, reverting to Robson's line. No, he played a second trump. Gold won and returned another trump.

If Helgemo ruffed another diamond with his last trump, setting up the ♦J, he could reach it only with the ♣A and would be stranded with the ♠3 as a second loser. Instead, he cashed the ♠Q and ♣A, returning to his hand with a diamond ruff. His last two cards were the ♣K-J and the queen did not fall. He was one down for 14 IMPs away.

When the round-robin drew to a close, England occupied the first place. This allowed them to choose their semi-final opponents in the top-4 bracket. They opted for Vikersund (Norway), leaving Zaleski (France) to play BC t'Onstein from the Netherlands.

After their heroic efforts in the round-robin, England lost the first half of the semi-final by 58-20. We will take a look at just one deal where IMPs were lost:

West	North	East	South
<i>Robson</i>	<i>Evjen</i>	<i>Allfrey</i>	<i>Smith</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♥	All Pass

If you think South has the ♣K, you can lead a low club from the West hand, hoping to insert the ♣8 and endplay South. If instead you think North has the ♣K, you can simply lead towards the ♣Q. On this deal there was no clue as to the club king's location. Robson played ace and another club to the queen. This would succeed not only when North held the ♣K but also when South held ♣Kx (or North had ♣J10). Two club tricks were lost and the slam was one down.

West	North	East	South
<i>Aabye</i>	<i>Forrester</i>	<i>Saur</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
–	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣	2♦	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

The Dutch team claimed the gold medals by 32-24, Norway winning the silver medals. In the bronze medal play-off, the Zaleski team who had recently lost the Bermuda Bowl final by only 2 IMPs, beat Allfrey by 66-42.

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## Highlights and New Features

**FUNBRIDGE** is taking a look back at the past year through an infographic showing the app players' activity. The figures reported by the online bridge platform are impressive, to say the least!

**314,805,000** deals were played in 2017 (that is 862,479 deals per day on average).

The number of deals played in one day reached a record high of 1,058,035 on 30 August 2017.

### Funbridge players' top 3 game modes:

#### 1. Series Tournaments (115,951,000 deals played)

Series tournaments are short tournaments of 4 deals allowing you to enter a series and pit yourself against other players in that series. Twice a month you can be promoted, relegated or maintain your position in your series based on your results.

#### 2. Tournaments of the Day (64,195,000 deals played)

Tournaments of the day are tournaments of 20 deals lasting 24 hours and allowing you to meet thousands of **FUNBRIDGE** players.

#### 3. Challenges (60,757,000 deals played)

In this game mode, you can decide to challenge other players or the artificial intelligence of the app (named "Argine") in tournaments of 5 deals with IMP scoring. The aim is to score better than your opponent.

6,075,656 challenges were played last year.

"Argine" was challenged nearly 800,000 times (80% of wins, 17% of losses and 3% of draws).

Among the most active countries on the app, France tops the list, followed by the USA and the Netherlands. The UK comes fourth.

1,100 teams faced each other in the 2017 Team Championship.

The Team Championship is a game mode where teams made up of 4-6 players face each other in divisions. The aim is to reach the top division with your team.

These figures do reflect the current craze for the game of bridge around the world. The **FUNBRIDGE** team knows it and they are not resting on their laurels. Enhancements will continue to be made to their online bridge app.

They have already announced their latest feature: "**FUNBRIDGE** Points".

To earn **FUNBRIDGE** Points, you will have to take part in one of the federation tournaments available or the **FUNBRIDGE** Points tournaments. Indeed, once you complete a federation tournament, for instance an EBU tournament, you will earn **FUNBRIDGE** Points on top of the Master Points awarded by the union.

The **FUNBRIDGE** Points you earn will allow you to join one of the new overall rankings that are ideal to see how you compare to all **FUNBRIDGE** players.

So if you too are crazy about bridge and you would like to compare your skills with other players, try **FUNBRIDGE**! Download the app for free. To do so, just open your favourite application store (App Store or Google Play Store) and enter "**FUNBRIDGE**" in the search bar or go to our website [www.funbridge.com](http://www.funbridge.com).

# DEFEND WITH JULIAN POTTAGE

## The Questions

Solutions on page 37

**1**

♠ 875  
♥ AJ  
♦ Q2  
♣ AQ9863

♠ AK632  
♥ 1084  
♦ KJ3  
♣ 52

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	1♣	1♠	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Partner leads the nine of spades. What is your plan?

**2**

♠ J963  
♥ KQ  
♦ J92  
♣ Q653

♠ A10  
♥ J1075  
♦ AQ8  
♣ AJ107

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	–	–	1♠*
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
All Pass			

1♠ 5-card majors and a strong NT

Partner leads the three of diamonds (some would lead the seven from partner's holding), dummy playing the nine. What is your plan?



## Test Your Technique

with Christophe Grosset

see Page 4

Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 105		♠ KJ94				
♥ 53		♥ Q108				
♦ J8732		♦ 109				
♣ AK108		♣ J976				
♠ A32						
♥ 76						
♦ 654						
♣ Q5432						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>S</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	N	E	W	S	
N	E					
W	S					
		♠ Q876				
		♥ AKJ942				
		♦ AKQ				
		♣ –				

4♥ played by South

West leads the five of diamonds. How should you play?

Declarer must do his best to lose no heart and at most three spades.

He needs to take the lead and play a spade, which will force whoever wins to switch to a heart, allowing declarer to take the heart finesse (the best play for no heart loser).

The very tricky part comes at trick 4. After the jack of hearts wins trick three, declarer immediately needs to cash out all his winners, hoping that when he exits with a spade at trick 10, the opponents will not be able to cash three more spade tricks. On the current layout, if declarer plays a spade at trick 4 (the expected play), West will be able to go up with the ace of spades, unblocking the suit, and after a trump exit declarer will go down.

Note that it would not help West to go up with the ace of spades at trick 2. If he then exits with a trump declarer wins, cashes his winners and exits with a spade as before.



know that that doesn't set the bar very high. He led a heart, and it doesn't matter whether or not I duck a round, as East gets in twice with clubs and plays red cards back at me both times. West just has to wait to get in with his king of spades, as I only have eight tricks, three in clubs, two in each red suit and the ace of spades.'

'Yes, I can see that,' Cissie responded. 'However, we had the Scarecrow at the helm and he decided to make his contract by ruffing out dummy's spades.'

'I thought you said he was in 3NT?' The logical mind of Aunty Em was baffled.

'He was, we knew it, the Lion knew it, but it took him to trick four before he found out. He won the heart lead, cashed the ace of spades, and played a club. When Ada showed out, he muttered incoherently and went up with the ace in order to play the eight of spades. He then 'ruffed' this with one of his clubs.

'It took a few minutes for that nice Lion and the two of us to explain to him why Ada was now on lead. He won the heart that she played and you could see him trembling.'

Aunty Em had her head in her hands. 'What did he do now?'

'He did what you would expect him to do when in a panic. He cashed as many winners as he could see, which meant the top two diamonds, and then exited with a club, clearly expecting no more tricks. He didn't even know that the queen of spades was a master.'

This was the situation facing Cissie when she won her ♣J:

♠ —	♠ Q9	♠ 10765
♥ 97	♥ —	♥ —
♦ Q108	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ Q108	♣ K
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W<div>S</div>E</div> </div>	
	♠ —	
	♥ 62	
	♦ 9	
	♣ 97	

'I did my best by not playing my master club. I played a spade to dummy's nine. There was a reasonable chance he would cash the other spade before exiting with a club, but he just resignedly called for a club and put his cards away muttering two down.' Cissie shook her head. 'He really had no clue, and clearly couldn't understand what was going on when the two of us and the Lion looked at the remaining cards and agreed on ten tricks.'

'No wonder we're losing,' the Wicked Witch of the West looked aghast. 'You shouldn't even have thought about what card to return. If you had just offered him one down he would probably have been delighted, even relieved.'

'Trying to distract attention from the real problem, are you?' Almira Gulch's tone made it very clear that venom was about to spout forth. 'That fellow with the big hands, what's his name?' She turned to look sneeringly at Aunty Em. 'Oh yes Hickory, one of your people. For menials, he and his partner play quite well, and he found the obvious Michaels overcall showing at least five-five in the red suits. With that information, I would have hoped that even she' she glared at the Wicked Witch, 'might have found the line that the Scarecrow stumbled on. Obviously one wants to remove his entry early.'

'Sadly I didn't get that help.' Aunty Em didn't really care which of Almira or the Wicked Witch she helped upset. She despised them both. 'I imagine that, with me at the table, my husband was too scared to make a vulnerable overcall on such poor suits.'

'Ladies, ladies, please,' Glinda was nearly in tears. 'We have eight more boards to play, and might I remind you that currently you are in second place.' It was very much against her nature, but she summoned up all her will power to address this fearsome group that were supposed to be her team. 'If you want to come back to the club and tell all the other ladies that you couldn't beat a Mens team with the Scarecrow in it, then just keep on as you are!'

There was silence. Even Almira couldn't find a barbed comment.

'It's time to restart,' Glinda announced to both teams. The Lion had been listening from the other end of the room, and he looked on in glowing admiration, as he wandered over to take his seat.

'It's been so good, just so good, playing with you,' the Chairman of the Lollipop Guild sat North and leaned over to his partner, Professor Marvel. 'I've learnt so much, so much indeed, just watching you. You have an

amazing feel for the cards.'

'Why, thank you,' the Professor responded. 'But believe me, the pleasure has been mine. I am used to partners who can be, shall we say, slightly more critical. Ah ladies,' the Professor stood up to welcome Ada and Cissie to the table. 'I am sure this will be a very pleasant eight boards. Well, at this table at least,' he added.

Board 25 was put on the table and they extracted their hands:

**Dealer East. Both Vul.**

♠ 10984	♠ —	♠ A7653
♥ 52	♥ A106	♥ K74
♦ J92	♦ AKQ10874	♦ 6
♣ KQ43	♣ A95	♣ J872
	♠ KQJ2	
	♥ QJ983	
	♦ 53	
	♣ 106	

The Chairman looked at the huge hand he had been dealt, and after the other three at the table had all passed he decided to open with a game forcing Two Clubs. He was delighted when his partner responded with a Two Diamond relay, as that meant the Professor would be playing the hand. He jumped to Four Diamonds to show a solid suit. The Professor now cue-bid Four Spades, fully aware his partner would probably take this as showing the ace, expecting to be able to correct this if his partner asked for key cards. However, the Chairman continued with Five Diamonds, confident that if Professor Marvel had extra values he would go on. It was clear to the Professor to pass.

The full auction had been:

West	North	East	South
Ada	Chairman	Cissie	Prof Marvel
—	—	Pass	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Ada thought about her lead. The auction had shown the trumps were solid, so it could do no harm leading from her holding. She placed the ♦2 on the table.

The Professor won the trick with his ace, and paused to consider the situation. He was well used to being in sub-optimal contracts, so he remained calm as he reflected that he was in the third best game. Three Notrump was laydown and Four Hearts would make easily. His own contract of Five Diamonds could have been no problem for him, but the lady on his left, clutching the handbag tightly to her bosom, had found the only lead to make it difficult. If trumps were continued when he exited with a Club, then he could be faced with three losers, two in clubs and a heart.

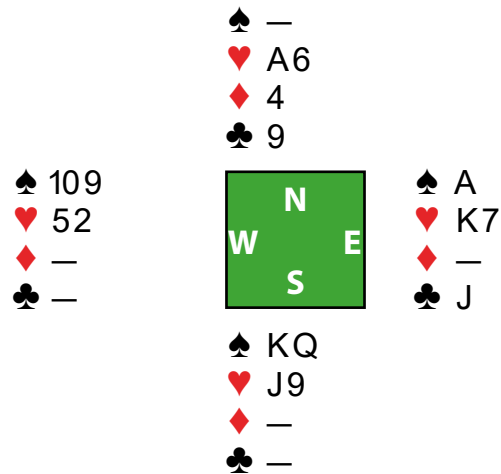
He called for the ♥10. If this was taken, then he had the entry to his hand to make the contract. Even if it was taken and the defence found a heart ruff, he would still have eleven tricks.

Cissie looked suspiciously at the Greek gift. Why was the Professor giving up a heart at this stage before he had pulled trumps? He might have a doubleton queen, but then it still wouldn't help if she took this trick, as she had no trumps to lead. She played ♥4 and the Professor overtook with his ♥Q to win the trick.

He placed the ♣6 on the table, and now it was Ada's turn to think. Was the Professor trying to duck a club? If she allowed him to duck it to East, it was likely her partner had no more trumps to lead. Yes, she decided, she had to split her honours. She played ♣Q, which the Professor won with the ace and returned a club to Ada, who then played a second trump.

The Professor now led out all his trumps and with four cards left reached this position:





Cissie, sitting East, realised she had no good discard on the last diamond. If she threw ♠A, she would be endplayed in clubs. If she discarded a heart, her king would fall under the ace. She threw her ♣J in the vain hope that she had misremembered the play of the suit, but the ♣9 was indeed now a master.

‘Well-defended ladies,’ the Professor turned to each of Ada and Cissie in turn. That would have been an easy contract on any other lead,’ he smiled at Ada, ‘or if the king of hearts had been taken,’ he smiled at Cissie, ‘or if the club honours hadn’t been split.’ He smiled at both of them.

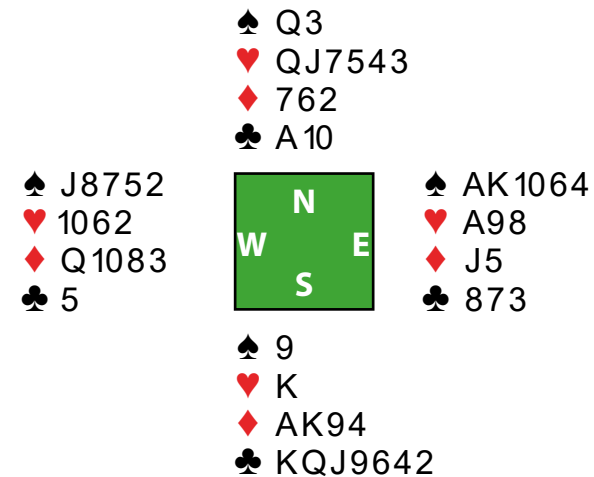
The Chairman of the Lollipop Guild looked on admiringly. ‘I must, yes I must write this hand up for the club magazine. What brilliant play and defence! Yes wonderful, just wonderful.’

At Dorothy’s table, this board had been played in Three Diamonds. The Scarecrow, sitting North, had opened One Diamond and rebid Three Diamonds over his partner’s One Heart. When he found himself playing there, it was beyond even his abilities to go down.

However, on several other boards he had excelled himself finding even worse plays and defences than usual. As the last board was placed on the table both Auntie Em and Dorothy were totally focussed. They knew that if the match was to be won by the Women, then it had to happen at their table. At two of the other tables they had partnerships playing who were using all their energy on arguing with each other, and at the third, the dangerous Professor was in the South seat. Playing against the Scarecrow, they had to take full advantage.

This was board 32:

Dealer West. E/W Vul.



The auction was relatively straightforward:

West	North	East	South
Auntie Em	Scarecrow	Dorothy	Lion
Pass	2♥	2♠	3♣
4♠	Pass	Pass	5♣
All Pass			

Auntie Em was well aware of the risks of her Four Spade bid at adverse vulnerability. However, she also knew the Lion held the strong hand and he would not have the temerity to double, especially against her. She was somewhat surprised when he had the courage to bid on. He clearly had an extremely strong hand, though there could have been a secondary motive – based on performance in the previous seven boards, the best position for the Scarecrow was definitely as dummy.

Dorothy won the spade lead and paused to consider the hand. She could see two defensive tricks. The setting trick had to be in diamonds, but she also had to stop dummy’s heart suit being of any use. The dummy entries were in trumps, so they had to be removed. If there was a second spade to cash then it was not running away. She switched to the ♣3.

Winning in hand, the Lion laid down the ♥K.

The focus was again on Dorothy. When her partner followed with the ♥2, it was clear the king was a singleton. If she won the trick then declarer would be able to enter dummy with the ♣A and discard two diamonds on the queen and jack of hearts. She had to give up one of her two certain tricks to destroy declarer's chances. She ducked.

The Lion now played three rounds of diamonds, Dorothy ruffing her partner's winner on the third round to play a second round of trumps. The defence had two tricks and the Lion still had an inevitable diamond loser – one down.

'Very well defended, Dorothy.' Compliments from Auntie Em were few and far between. 'Unless our teammates have completely collapsed I think that should probably seal the match.'

Glinda was waiting anxiously in the coffee lounge. 'How have you done? Have you had a good set?'

'I think we've clinched it,' said Auntie Em confidently. 'We've pulled back well over 2,000 points with a bit of help from the North player at our table. I think it should be sufficient to counter the likely deficiencies at our other tables.'

The other three tables all finished a few minutes later and when Glinda added up the four totals, they had recovered 2,140 points, meaning an overall loss by 40 points.

'Double check, including the vulnerabilities,' instructed a frantic Irritable Witch. 'changing a fifty into a hundred is all we need!' A recount produced the same result. The loud happy voices at the other end of the room confirmed their worst fears.

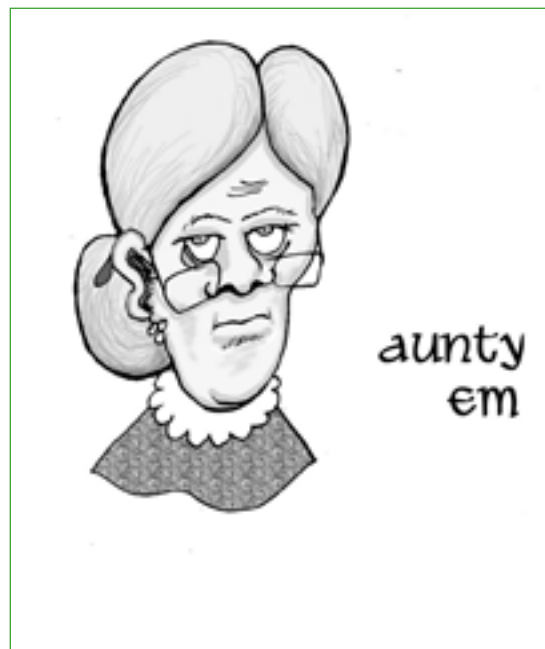
Auntie Em grabbed the other three score cards. Board by board, the results seemed much as she would have expected, until she reached the final board. Her anger turned into a broad smile. 'I see, Miss Gulch, that they made Five Clubs against you on board 32. Can I ask which of you sat East?'

♠ J8752	♠ Q3	♠ AK1064
♥ 1062	♥ QJ7543	♥ A98
♦ Q1083	♦ 762	♦ J5
♣ 5	♣ A10	♣ 873
	♠ 9	
	♥ K	
	♦ AK94	
	♣ KQJ9642	

'She did! That's why the contract made.' The Wicked Witch was also recovering from the shock of losing the match as she too realised that the blame was about to fall on Almira Gulch.

'I can't see the problem,' Almira cut in. 'Remember we had the Tin Man playing the hand not one of your opponents. He just ruffed the second round of spades and played the king of hearts. I ducked, of course, but he entered dummy with the ten of clubs and played a second high heart setting up a discard. It was a trivial make. I'm sure that if there is some double dummy way to improve on the defence, my so-called partner would have already told me.'

Auntie Em's smile grew broader. 'You could have had Benito Garozzo playing the hand, but against a good defender, like Dorothy here, even he would have failed.'



'Absolutely,' the Wicked Witch grinned, 'Some hands are well worth discussing. I'm sure that all of your teammates will want to enjoy this one. Let me show you,' she turned towards Almira, 'what you should have done.' She found she was talking to empty space as her partner was already rapidly making her way to the cloakroom. Discussing her faults and congratulating opponents were not on her agenda.

As the Mens team made their way out of the club it was clear that the raucous recriminations would go on for some time. Uncle Henry stood by his car, waiting for Auntie Em to appear. As the pleasure of winning the match seeped away it was replaced by a sense of foreboding. His mind turned to his earlier conversation with the Tin Man and he smiled bitterly. What was that other Russian writer chap? Leo Trotsky? He had a feeling that they might have won the war, but he was going to enjoy little peace.

# Answers to “Defend With Julian Pottage”

See page 31

1

	♠ 875	
	♥ AJ	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ AQ9863	
♠ 94		♠ AK632
♥ 532		♥ 1084
♦ A8765		♦ KJ3
♣ 1074		♣ 52
	♠ QJ10	
	♥ KQ976	
	♦ 1094	
	♣ KJ	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	1♣	1♠	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Partner leads the nine of spades. What is your plan?

The bidding and lead suggests three spades on your left. You could duck the first trick, aiming to maintain communications with partner. An entry opposite and four spade tricks in your hand suffices to beat the contract. So you do go for that?

The strong clubs in dummy make it likely that the suit will run. Partner needs either four clubs or precisely king-jack-ten. Even if that is case, you must consider the further danger that the heart suit is running. Partner would need the king of hearts to have an entry there.

All things considered, it seems a better bet to try making the first five tricks. For this to happen you simply need to find partner with the ace of diamonds. Three diamond tricks and two spades will give the five you need. Since you do not wish to gamble on the position of the ten of diamonds, you should simply win the first spade and return the three of diamonds.

2

	♠ J963	
	♥ KQ	
	♦ J92	
	♣ Q653	
♠ 5		♠ A10
♥ 86432		♥ J1075
♦ 10753		♦ AQ8
♣ 942		♣ AJ107
	♠ KQ8742	
	♥ A9	
	♦ K64	
	♣ K8	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
–	–	–	1♠*
Pass	2♠	Double	4♠
All Pass			

1♠ 5-card majors and a strong NT

Partner leads the three of diamonds (some would lead the seven from partner's holding), dummy playing the nine. What is your plan?

You can count 16 points in your hand and 9 in dummy. This leaves 15, all of which you can reasonably assume will be on your left. Counting tricks, you can see three aces. Reading the three of diamonds as fourth highest from a ten-high suit, you see a chance of making a slow diamond winner as well. For this to happen you surely need partner to hold a five-card heart suit because otherwise one of dummy's diamonds will go on the third round of hearts. If you cannot make a slow diamond trick, you cannot make a slow club either since a 5-3-3-3 shape for South would be fourteen cards.

The big danger is falling victim to an endplay or strip squeeze. In this case, it is good to retain the major tenace in diamonds by holding back the ace, instead covering the nine with the queen. You can continue the good work by taking the first spade and playing the ten (or jack) of clubs on the first round of clubs. For your last three cards you will keep two cards in the minor suit in which dummy reduces to a singleton.

*Liz McGowan reports on Scotland's participation in the Women's Elite Tournament in Beijing*

Scotland's Women's Team are a hard-working and talented bunch, but most of us have demanding jobs. We have struggled to perform well at international level, until last year when we reached the semi-finals of the World Mind Games in Wroclaw. We ran out of steam against France, and lost the play-off for the Bronze medal against China.

So we were delighted to be invited to the Beijing Hua Yuan Cup World Women's Elite Tournament, along with seven of the best Women's Teams on the world stage. The organisers consult Gianarrigo Rona about which teams should be invited, and we were very grateful for his vote.

The event is pure pleasure. From the Opening Ceremony to the Closing Banquet the organisation is smooth and unobtrusive. All we had to do was to enjoy the luxurious accommodation and wonderful food, and play a little bridge.

Most of the field play a five-card Major, strong no-trump method, though the two Chinese teams favour Precision Club. Fiona McQuaker and I were the only traditionalists playing Acol with a weak no-trump. Most modern experts argue that Acol has had its day, but there is life in the old dog yet. One advantage is that you can bid clubs naturally. This makes it easy to reach club slams.



## Liz McGowan chatting with your editor

♠ J108	♠ KQ5	♠ 97432
♥ AJ8652	♥ 10	♥ KQ7
♦ J86	♦ AQ5	♦ 10974
♣ 6	♣ Q107543	♣ 2
	<div>W N E S</div>	
	♠ A6	
	♥ 943	
	♦ K32	
	♣ AKJ98	

West	North	East	South
–	–	Pass	1♣
1♥	3♥*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣*	Pass	4♥*
Pass	6♣	All Pass	
3♥	Splinter		
4♣	Minorwood ace ask		
4♥	0 or 3		

We had been playing Minorwood for some time, but this was the first time we used it in real life. The big advantage of using four of the agreed minor as Keycard Blackwood is that you can stop at the 5-level when there are two missing aces: after 4NT – 5♥ or 5♠ you may have nothing better to do than bid slam knowing you are off two keycards. Sometimes this makes, of course, but not for unlucky players like you and me.

Strong No-trumpers can reach slam easily enough via a transfer to clubs followed by an Autosplinter, but it was missed a couple of times.

Another club slam.

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

♠ 10  
 ♥ A105  
 ♦ KJ1074  
 ♣ AK85

♠ Q3  
 ♥ K9732  
 ♦ A982  
 ♣ 107

♠ AKJ75  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ 53  
 ♣ QJ962

♠ 98642  
 ♥ J864  
 ♦ Q6  
 ♣ 43

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

2NT Good 4+card club raise  
 3♥ Shortage  
 4♣ Minorwood  
 4♦ 1 or 4 keycards  
 4♥ Do you have the queen of clubs?  
 4♠ Yes, and the ♠K

6♣ turned out to depend on a diamond guess, though East might easily have held the other red queen. The four declarers who bid slam all guessed well – perhaps South would lead the ♦A if she held it....

Modern teaching tells us to open the higher-ranking of two 5-card suits. We have forgotten that is often right to open the higher of two touching suits when those suits are spades and clubs

Dealer East. N/S Vul.

♠ Q74  
 ♥ Q108653  
 ♦ K93  
 ♣ K

♠ 1093  
 ♥ A42  
 ♦ 1075  
 ♣ QJ82

♠ AKJ75  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ 82  
 ♣ A6543

♠ 62  
 ♥ KJ7  
 ♦ AQJ64  
 ♣ 1097

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

Some reached this game after opening 1♠, but knowing that partner has club support makes it much more tempting. Not the best nonvulnerable game ever, but one that will succeed when trumps break 3-2 and the finesse works, or clubs play for no losers. (I have been in far worse.) It was bid just three times.



Another example, this one from the SBU Grand Masters Pairs

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠ 73	
	♥ A108543	
	♦ AKQ93	
	♣ —	
♠ QJ1092		♠ AK864
♥ 6		♥ K2
♦ J5		♦ 872
♣ AKJ105		♣ 432
	♠ 5	
	♥ QJ97	
	♦ 1064	
	♣ Q9876	

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♣	2NT*	3♠	4♥
4♠	5♦	5♠	Pass
Pass	Double	All Pass	

2NT Hearts and Diamonds

Where West opened 1♠ North overcalled in hearts, East raised spades, West bid game, North re-entered with 5♦, and East, with a sure defensive trick in ♥K, was tempted to double. North made 5♥X at 4 of the 9 tables, and was allowed to play in 5♥ at a fifth.

After opening 1♣ and hearing partner bid spades, West will never sell out to 5♥. And East will not double 5♥ if partner has shown a big black two-suiter. Which West cannot do after opening 1♠. After opening 1♣ you can rebid spades with relative safety no matter how high the auction when it returns to you.

A word of warning: it is possible to overdo the 1♣ opener.

Dealer North. N/S Vul.

	♠ AKQ93	
	♥ KQ4	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 7653	
♠ 765		♠ 1084
♥ AJ8653		♥ —
♦ 8		♦ QJ9742
♣ QJ8		♣ A942
	♠ J2	
	♥ 10972	
	♦ AK1063	
	♣ K10	

West	North	East	South
—	1♣!	3♦	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

We are back in Beijing.

When you sit North there is a lot to do: deal with the Bridgmate, fill in your scorecard, get the next Board on the table.... When you are also Dealer you may, in a rush to start the auction, miss sort your cards—or maybe that is just me. Some of my spades looked very club-like. When the auction returned to me at 3♦ I had spotted my error. Partner probably wanted me to double 3♦, but a club lead might be disastrous and I wimped out by bidding 3♠. Partner bid 3NT in disgust and we settled for +630.

A spade lead, diamond return and a second spade looks like a good defence to 3♦ doubled. It may be possible to negotiate a fourth trump trick for -1100. A club lead is less effective.

# Bridge with Larry Cohen – Older and Wiser

[www.larryco.com](http://www.larryco.com)

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

## Am I getting Older, or Wiser?

I get a chuckle when people complain about getting old. “The alternative,” I tell them, “is much worse.” We are all getting older, of course, but with that is supposed to come wisdom.

In bridge, we also get wiser with age. Youthfulness is usually equated with wildness in the bidding. I used to be a reckless pre-empter. Now, I am more disciplined. (More on that in Part II of this article). When it comes to opening the bidding, I am also moderating my ways. No, I’m not going into one of those ultra-sound shells (*à la* “Roth-Stone school”). I still believe that striking the first blow is the way to go – I hope I never become a stodgy opening bidder. Still, there is room to learn. Recently, I dealt with this hand:

♠5 ♥QJ42 ♦AK10 ♣J10765

In the past, I wouldn’t have asked “am I vulnerable?” I wouldn’t have cared if it was matchpoints or IMPs. I would have just opened the bidding 1♣ and gone on with my life. I have 11 HCP plus 1 for this, 1 for that – good enough. Alternatively, the Rule of 20 would dictate opening this hand (11 HCP 5 4 in the longest suits).

I couldn’t put this rule any better than my good friend, Marty Bergen, so I am using his writing on the topic. Of course, I have his permission to show it here – he’s proud of the rule.

What do I (Larry) think of the Rule of 20? My opinions are at the end.

## The Rule of 20 (by Marty Bergen)

After teaching bridge for over 20 years, I thought I had seen it all. However, I had the following experience in the winter of 1994, and it made a lasting impression on me. My class consisted of 28 experienced players, and I will never forget that first hand. The dealer held: ♠KQ54 ♥A873 ♦6 ♣K1064

I was amazed as player after player passed this hand. Only one person

opened. What was going on? I immediately stopped their non-bidding and asked: “Do you open with 13 points?” Everyone answered yes. (Whew!) I now asked the \$64,000 question. “How do you count your points when you pick up your cards?” Seventeen students answered that they simply counted their high card points (HCP) and added points for distribution only if they found a fit. Ten students answered that they added points for length to their HCP: one point for a five-card suit, two points for a six-card suit, etc. I am familiar with this technique, but I cannot agree with any method of evaluation that calls for passing hands like this one.

The one student who opened said that she had added “short-suit points” to her HCP. One point for a doubleton, two for a singleton, and three for a void. With 12 HCP plus two points for the singleton, she was happy to open. This was the technique I learned when I took up bridge. How did I resolve the confusion? I taught them The Rule of 20.

In first and second seat, add the length of your two longest suits to your HCP. When the total is 20 or more, open the bidding. With less, do not open at the one level. Here is how it works. It is a matter of simple addition: HCP + # cards in longest suit + # cards in second longest suit. This is all you must know to determine whether you should open the bidding in first or second position (i.e., when partner has not had a chance to pass). If there is a tie for longest or second-longest, you can select either; I always use a major suit for my computation.

Try some examples.

The first is the hand that only one player opened in class.

♠KQ54 ♥A873 ♦6 ♣K1064

4 spades & 4 hearts + 12 HCP = 20. Open 1♣.

♠AQJ865 ♥- ♦972 ♣K754

6 spades & 4 clubs + 10 HCP = 20. Open 1♠.

♠KJ5 ♥A875 ♦Q75 ♣Q62

4 hearts & 3 spades + 12 HCP = 19. Pass.

♠87 ♥Q54 ♦AKQ976 ♣9

7 diamonds & 3 hearts + 11 HCP = 21. Open 1♦.

The purpose of counting points is to evaluate your trick-taking potential to bid to the correct contract. However, you cannot accurately assess your values if you count only HCP. The reality of bridge life is that hands with long suits and short suits have far more potential than their balanced counterparts. Give The Rule of 20 a chance. There is no question that The Rule of 20 will increase your chances of having an opening bid. Is this desirable? Here are my thoughts:

- 1) You bid more accurately after your side opens.
- 2) It is much easier to open than to overcall.
- 3) It must be right to get in the first punch. I hate to guess after my opponents have bid, particularly if they have pre-empted.
- 4) It is more fun to bid – absolutely, positively. If passing all afternoon is your idea of a good time, I suggest you check your pulse.

## Larry's thoughts:

Thank you Marty for giving permission to introduce your Rule. Now for my thoughts. I think the Rule of 20, is a good guideline, especially for newer players. It gives an immediate (and easy) ballpark estimate of what is or isn't an opening bid. However (and Marty would be the first to agree), it is just "general advice." It is not to be followed religiously. There are many tiny outside factors which need to be considered, such as:

- 1) Spot cards (especially 10's and 9's).
- 2) Vulnerability (if borderline, be more aggressive if not vul).
- 3) Points in long suits (♠ AQ1075 ♥ A10965 ♦ 43 ♣ 2 is much better than ♠ 86542 ♥ 97654 ♦ AQ ♣ A).
- 4) Short honours should be discounted a bit (such as singleton kings or doubleton queens or jacks).
- 5) Suits such as AJ10 or AQ10 are worth more than their point count, especially if accompanied by length.

Some writers have carelessly debunked the Rule of 20. What they really mean to say is that the Rule is a good basic starting point, but can use some fine-tuning.

However, a new and more mature guideline has entered my brain. I look ahead to the future. I ask myself, "What will happen if I open 1♣ with this borderline hand?" The answers are mostly negative. For one, partner might

lead a club (from, say, ♣Kxx or ♣Axx). That wouldn't be so good. Even worse, it might be our hand. What do you think partner will respond? You know how partners are. Surely, you can look forward to the pleasure of his 1♠ response. Now what? The death rebid. You can't rebid notrump with a singleton, can't rebid your 5-card suit, and can't reverse into 2♥. You can't pass, so you have to make one of those lovely rebids. Yuk! So, why not show a little maturity and just pass? I gave it a try. (It hurt a little, but I got over it).

What happened next? I actually got to have a good auction. LHO opened the bidding 1♠, and my partner overcalled 2♥. RHO passed, and I got to make a splinter bid of 3♠. The hand was off my chest. I had painted a nice picture of my shape and strength, and I managed this all without opening the bidding. Had the opponents bid and raised spades, I could have entered the auction with a takeout double, again providing a good description.

Anyway, I'm still opening light, but when awkward hands arise, I have become emotionally capable of passing. I hope it doesn't ruin my reputation.

Another facet of maturity (age?) is the development of a sane pre-emptive philosophy.

The younger they are, the more they bid. This philosophy isn't restricted only to the young—I see many tournament players that bid every time it is their turn. They pre-empt with five-card suits, and they don't care about suit quality.

Why?

Having played such a style (in my Marty-Bergen days), I feel well qualified to comment. Opening 2♥ with, say:

♠52 ♥J87642 ♦A32 ♣75 is what I'm talking about. Such actions certainly can work. You might pre-empt the opponents (especially if partner can raise) and force them into a ridiculous position. Opening 2♥ could easily hit a homerun. But, there is the flip side. It can often strike out. It is a real swingy, "top-bottom" action.

I prefer to go more down the middle. I wouldn't open 2♥ with that hand, but would do so, with:

♠52 ♥QJ9842 ♦A32 ♣75

This is still not a good-enough suit/hand for the really stodgy crowd, but I think they need to loosen up a little. They would probably need at least the 10, and maybe even that wouldn't be sufficient. They hardly ever get

dealt a hand on which they can pre-empt.

So, what qualifies me to recommend this middle ground? Having played all three styles (sound, medium, and aggressive) I can tell you that I've seen it all. I am 100% convinced that "medium" is the long-run winner. If I had to give up "medium," the next-best would be "aggressive." I don't like the pain of enduring the strikeouts, but there are almost as many home runs and fun to make up for it. In a weak field, especially, aggressive is not a bad way to go.

## SOUND RED LIGHT

As far as "sound,"—count me out. I have seen first hand how this is clearly a losing pre-emptive strategy. Yes, on the few deals where it comes up (you actually get to pre-empt), you are usually a winner (partner gauges the auction, opening lead, and/or defence quite well). However, the sound pre-empters are losing out big time by not setting enough problems for their opponents. I love to play against such (non) pre-empters. They never get in my way—life is good when the opponents are in love with passing.

# The Language of Bridge

317 pages. Paperback. \$19.99

Kit Woolsey's first new bridge book in 35 years is aimed at an intermediate audience, but contains plenty of insights for advanced and expert players. He examines the communication between partners as they work together to reach the best contract or try to defeat declarer's on defence. Kit brings his unique take on the game to the subject of partnership communication—thinking about bidding as a language and the auction as a conversation. Kit's unique way of thinking about the game, coupled with his clear and systematic way of explaining concepts, make this an invaluable learning tool for the advancing player and a must-have for any bridge enthusiast's library. Bridge is a game of communication between partners. As such, the methods of communication used in bridge—the bids we make during the auction and cards we play on defence—constitute a language. Understanding how to speak that language requires more than learning what the different words mean; one must know how and why to use these words. Like words in a sentence, an individual bid's meaning will be augmented and amplified by the context of the auction and sequence of other bids. In order to learn to speak this language fluently, we also have to learn to think correctly. As when we are speaking English, we use our bridge language ("Bringlish") in the pursuit of a goal. The goal of bidding is to get to the best contract, not to follow some rules or simply describe your hand. The goal of defence is setting the contract or taking the maximum number of tricks, not telling partner what you hold or giving the right signal. Kit Woolsey tackles this subject in characteristic style: clear and logical analysis, supported by numerous example hands.

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# From Our French Correspondent

by Ron Tacchi

December became a bit of a blur as on November 23 I was informed that *Bridge Magazine* was no longer going to be funded. Your illustrious editor, Mark Horton, and I, perhaps rashly, decided that we would carry on but with the idea of making the magazine free. The concept being that at that price there would be more readers, perhaps even enough to attract paying advertisers. So overnight *A New Bridge Magazine* was born. At that time there was no website and perhaps more alarmingly, I had never created one, but I had lots of supposedly excellent software (Muse in the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite for the technically minded), so I found myself a tutorial online and spent the weekend following the course. There was a slight technical hitch in that the lessons I undertook were from a previous version of the software and that the latest had been 'improved' but I carried on nevertheless.

By early December a proof of concept materialised, whilst at the same time I worked on the new landscape format of the magazine. This was already partially underway as we had hoped to upgrade the old BM, but this was to be a completely new look. Then there was a case of good news/bad news in that the link to the website got out into the real world and people started signing up for the new magazine. The website was not geared up for this and so I had the task of processing these registrations manually – about one hour per one hundred and I got over one thousand, so not only did I lose more than one day's effort but was continually interrupted to answer queries and do further updates.

The next task was to find a way to automate the registrations and a methodology of emailing all those who had signed up. My first problem was a realistic solution was not to be found for no money. That was a bit of a drawback as budget was already overspent when I registered the domain name (our budget being £0.00), however after some patient research the best value for money solution I believed was 'sendinblue'. Again actually implementing it was not trivial but once I understood how it worked it has been extremely effective and on the day of writing it has been responsible for well over five thousand emails and I suspect when you receive the email telling you this edition of the magazine is available we will be closer

to fifteen thousand.

I must confess to being slightly amazed that we pulled it off, I know there is a lot to be done to further improve the magazine and I sincerely hope that between penning this missive and the next edition being published some of the more egregious errors will have been righted.

In spite of spending over ten hours a day in front of my keyboard there are two things that are inviolate. The first is visiting a local café on Friday nights for a game of dice. The outing has two reasons, the first being to fill up my car for nothing. Yes nothing! I have an electric car, a Renault Zoe. Virtually every village and town in France has a charging point which is normally free if you avail yourself of an appropriate plastic card. Some now can be used with your credit card if do not have a card. So when I go to the café I plug in my car a mere fifty meters away and when I leave the café a couple of hours later she is fully charged and ready for another 250 kilometres. Over here the government gives you €6,000 if you buy an electric car and then if you scrap an old diesel car when purchasing a new one they give you €4,000. In April last year Renault were also offering a further incentive of €1,000, so that meant €11,000 off the list price and that coupled with a very generous financing scheme meant it was almost a no-brainer to save the planet. It does well over 200 kilometres before a recharge is needed – I have already had a trip to the UK.

The other activity I try not to miss is bridge at the local club on a Wednesday afternoon. I was there last week when Watson came up to me whilst I was enjoying an apero after the weekly duplicate and quizzed me.



‘How come you made Four Hearts with an overtrick on Board 10? At my table declarer went down.’

As usual I did not tell him the answer but suggested he might like to work it out with a series of questions and answers.

♠ KJ74  
♥ Q8753  
♦ 943  
♣ 5

♠ A83  
♥ AK104  
♦ J7  
♣ AJ109

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

‘I had better explain that in the somewhat bizarre bidding system my partner has dreamt up my 1NT showed 18+ any distribution and his 2♣ was Stayman. (Yes, even I can count that it is only 17, but in my book those two tens and the associated nine are worth a point in anybody's money.)

‘West led the king of diamonds which held and then the queen, also holding, and continued with a third round to East's ace which I ruffed. Tell me what you know.’

‘Having learnt my lesson from last month I am confident that East must have the rest of the points as that will give him an initial count of twelve, enough to open the bidding. Other than that I don't think I know a lot about his hand, other than his clubs will not be longer than his diamonds.’

‘Good, that's exactly the picture I painted to myself. So now what is your cunning plan?’

‘Well I have nine top tricks if the trumps are not 4-0 and if they are 2-2 I can ruff a spade in my hand for ten tricks. So to start I will take a round of trumps with the ace to check they are not 4-0.’

‘OK, never a bad plan to remove some the defenders' trumps. Both

defenders followed to a round of trumps. Can you see any other way you might establish another trick?’

‘Not really.’

‘What did say about East's clubs?’

‘They would not be longer than his diamonds.’

‘Correct, does that not mean they might be shorter and if that were the case can you imagine a favourable layout?’

‘Ah, I know he has the king and queen of clubs and if he had only three of them then I could establish a club trick.’

‘Good thinking, certainly a plausible distribution. So what is your plan of action?’

‘I will continue with the ace of clubs and ruff one.’

‘Jolly good, both defenders follow, each with two small cards and each petering.’

‘Well that's that plan out of the window. I am not sure what to do now.’

‘You said if trumps were 2-2 there would be no problem, so why not discover the trump situation’

‘OK, I'll take another round of trumps with my king.’

‘West shows out.’

‘There goes my other plan, at a bit of a loss now.’

‘Well there is one important question you have not asked me.’

‘What's that.’

‘You did not enquire as to what card West discarded.’

‘OK, OK, what was West's card?’

‘A diamond, you now have all the pieces to fit into the jigsaw and come up with the answer. Think about East's distribution.’

‘He must have four diamonds and since I have not seen the king or queen of clubs, he must have four clubs, I now know he has three hearts and so I deduce he has only two spades of which one is the queen, so I can drop the doubleton queen of spades – it seems so easy when you point me in the right direction.’

‘OK, off you go, tell me what you are playing and how many tricks you are taking.’

‘I'll draw the last trump with the queen and then cash the ace of spades and just to give East a frisson I will lead towards the king jack but put up the king and drop the doubleton queen.’

‘How many tricks what that?’

‘Ten’

‘But I made eleven, so where’s the difference?’

‘No idea.’

‘When I got to stage when I discovered the 3-1 split in the trump suit I ruffed another club to confirm the count in the suit. When East produced the queen of clubs I assumed he had four of them, so I drew the final trump and rather than cash the ace of spades I cashed the king and unblocked the eight. I came to hand with the ace of spades dropping the queen and then led towards the J7 and covered West’s card so I took four spade tricks – East held the ace and queen and nine of spades so I was able to finesse against the ten, but I had to unblock the eight otherwise West would have played low when I led the eight from hand, leaving me with a losing club in my hand. I was not certain to make eleven tricks but playing as I did gave me the chance of an extra trick if East held the nine or ten of spades – with odds of 40%, a play at which not to be sniffed.’ *(editor wished to change that sentence to end with a preposition – I overruled him RT.)*

‘I can now see the point of cashing the AK in the other order, but I am sure I would never have thought of unblocking the eight, that might just be thinking ahead a step too far for me.’

‘How would you have played if you had discovered a similar East minor-suit holding but that it was West who held three trumps?’

‘I don’t really see it – East must have four spades to the queen and the top clubs.’

‘Well play as I did, i.e. ruffing a third round of clubs and drawing the last trump and coming down to four cards – the jack of clubs and three spades to the ace in hand and four spades to the king jack in dummy. What will East keep?’

‘He will have to keep the king of clubs and three spades, so he cannot keep a diamond. All you have to do is come to hand with the ace of spades and exit with your club. Then poor old East will have to lead away from his queen of spades into the teeth of dummy’s spade honours. You will have completed an elimination and throw-in and feel very pleased with yourself. You can look up on Google as to what exactly that means.

‘Your round.’



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

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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!

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Funbridge will be the perfect ally if you want to take up bridge or just improve your skills. Indeed, you will make rapid progress thanks to the practice modes available including "exclusive tournaments", i.e. customised tournaments created by other community players providing opportunities for exchanges about the deals played. You will thus be able to ask your questions to advanced

players and to increase your knowledge.

The app is full of very useful small features: watch a replay of other players' moves (bidding and card play), replay deals to score better, get the meaning of the bids played by the other players sitting at the table, ask the computer for advice, get an analysis of the way you play by the artificial intelligence at the end of a deal played... You will definitely learn from the app!

When you will feel ready, you will be able to pit yourself against thousands of other players by playing tournaments on Funbridge: tournaments of the day, series tournaments and Team Championships. As you can understand, this is the competition part of the app. In these different game modes, you will join rankings and see your rank change live based on your results.

You will also find "federation tournaments" in that section of the app. Several national bridge federations including the English Bridge Union and the French Bridge Federation have placed their trust in Funbridge to hold official tournaments awarding federation points allowing their members to increase their national rank directly via the app. You can't find your federation on Funbridge yet? Be patient, it is only a matter of time! Meanwhile, you can take part in tournaments of other federations since they are open to all.

Finally, you will enjoy comparing yourself with the other community players thanks to short individual tournaments called "challenges". The aim is to get the best scores on all the deals of

the tournament to beat your opponent. May the best win!

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.*

### The Right Move

In the round of 16 of the Open Trials, you have a difficult hand to handle opposite partner's Precision 1♦ opening. As South, you hold.

Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ AQ6  
♥ 7  
♦ AJ742  
♣ KJ102

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	?

1♦ 11-15 HCP, at least 2 diamonds. If balanced, 13-15 (since 1NT opener would be 10-12).

Your logical choices are 2♣ and 2♦. To make an intelligent decision, it is necessary to examine the likely follow-ups for each of these calls.

2♣ is a natural game force. It may be a 4-card suit. It also may contain a major, but with a 4 card major you will always have 5+ clubs to bid 2♣.

Partner will raise with 4+ clubs if he is balanced. If he is unbalanced with 4+ clubs he will make a splinter regardless of his strength.

Otherwise, partner will always rebid 2♦ if he has 5+ diamonds. If he doesn't have 5+ diamonds or 4+ clubs he will usually bid a 4-card major if he has one (which does not imply an unbalanced hand) or 2NT. He may bypass a 4-card major and bid 2NT if he judges his hand is appropriately no-trump oriented.

After any of these rebids, follow-up bidding is entirely natural.

2♦ is inverted. It shows 5+ diamonds, at least invitational values, and is forcing to 3♦. It also denies a 4-card major.

After the 2♦ call, opener's bids are relatively natural and geared toward determining if 3NT is right. 2 of a major isn't necessarily a 4-card suit—it might be just concentration. 2NT is natural, forcing. 3♣ is always a 5-card suit. 3♦ is minimal, NE. 3 of a major is a splinter.

If responder's next bid is 3♣, that shows a 4-card club suit. If opener bids 2NT, a 3 of a major rebid by responder shows shortness. Otherwise, responder's calls are natural. 3♦ by either partner may be passed.

Your call?

♠ AQ6  
♥ 7  
♦ AJ742  
♣ KJ102

Either call could work out well. 2♣ has the advantage of establishing a game force. But 2♦ shows the 5-card diamond suit, and clubs can be bid later. Also, if partner rebids 2NT you can now bid 3♥ to show the heart shortness which could be quite valuable information to partner. It looks like starting with 2♦ figures to work better.

You choose to bid 2♣. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

3♣ 4 or 5 clubs, no shortness.

Your bids mean the following:

3-level calls are naturalish, assumed looking for the best game.

4♣ sets clubs as trumps and shows slam interest.

4♦ is RKC for clubs.

4♥/♠ is a splinter.

4NT is a diamond splinter.



Your call?

You need to find the right move here. If you want to aim towards 3NT, you should start with 3♦ or 3♠. The problem with this approach is that partner will be thinking a single heart stopper is sufficient. Imagine partner with something like: ♠Jx ♥AJx ♦KQxx ♣Qxxx. He will certainly bid 3NT over 3♠ and probably bid 3♥ over 3♦, and an inferior 3NT will be reached. Also, this approach will not in any way describe the slam potential of your hand.

What does it take to make a slam? Picture partner with something like ♠Kxx ♥xxx ♦Kx ♣AQxxx. 6♣ is a virtual claim, and that is a 12-count when partner's range is 13-15. That example hand is sufficient to make it clear that slam is in the picture. Also, it is very likely that 5♣ is secure, and quite possibly more secure than 3NT even if partner does have a heart stopper.

## What are your reasonable moves?

4♦ RKC is too much. There are too many hands partner would have with one keycard and the queen of trumps but slam would be anything from bad to having no play. 4♣ brings partner into the loop, but partner won't know what is working and what isn't.

The best move is 4♥, splinter. This flies past RKC, but keycards and controls aren't the issue here. Partner will know what is working and what isn't. If he is looking at AQ of clubs, king of diamonds, and king of spades he will know his hand is gold and he will drive to slam. With the ace of hearts instead of one of these cards he will still love his hand. Opposite these hands, slam may be laydown and will be at worst on a finesse. If he doesn't have the ace of hearts and is missing one of those cards, he will not be able to drive to slam, and slam will be at best on a finesse. That illustrates that the splinter, followed by showing no more cooperation, is the right approach.

You choose to bid 4♦ RKC. The bidding continues:

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	?

4♦ RKC for clubs

4♠ 1 or 4 keycards

4NT by you would ask for the queen of trumps. If partner has it, he will show specific kings along with the queen. If he doesn't have it, he will sign off at 5♣.

Your call?

♠ AQ6  
♥ 7  
♦ AJ742  
♣ KJ102

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	?

You cannot quit in 5♣. It is always wrong to bid RKC and then stop when you are only off one keycard. The main purpose of RKC is to avoid slam off 2 keycards or 1 keycard and the queen of trumps. If you aren't willing to bid slam when you have enough keycards, that indicates that you should not have been bidding RKC in the first place.

Asking for the queen of trumps is clear. If partner doesn't have it you know that 5♣ is high enough, since slam will be at best on a finesse. If he does have the queen, you will be in 6♣. 6♣ might not be a good contract, but when you bid RKC you committed yourself to slam if your side has adequate keycards.

You bid 4NT, asking for the queen of clubs. Partner bids 5♣, denying the queen, and naturally you pass.

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

4NT Asks for queen of clubs

5♣ No queen of clubs

West leads the ♠7. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> leads.

♠ K5  
♥ KQ42  
♦ Q106  
♣ A875

♠ AQ6  
♥ 7  
♦ AJ742  
♣ KJ102

How do you plan the play?

The simple play is to try to guess the queen of clubs, and if you get that wrong take the diamond finesse.

Looking at the club suit in isolation, the percentage play is to cash the ace and then lead to the jack. The reason is that you can pick up ♣Q9xx on your right without loss, but you cannot pick up ♣Q9xx on your left. On other auctions you might have some inference about the queen of clubs from West's failure to lead a club, but not on this auction. You have told the opponents you are missing the queen of clubs, so West will never be leading a club whether he has the queen or not. The ♠7 lead might be from anything. Thus, there doesn't appear to be any obvious reason to play West for the queen of clubs, so you might as well take the percentage play.

Can you do better? The obvious alternative is to try hearts first. If West has the ace, perhaps he will duck. Also, there might be a possible end-play if you can cash enough winners and then throw West in with the queen of clubs.

Is there any chance that West will duck the ace of hearts? If he doesn't have the king of diamonds he might well duck. He doesn't know your diamond length. If you have a singleton heart and Axx of diamonds, going up ace would cost a trick since you would get two diamond discards. However, if West doesn't have the king of diamonds you are always making. If West does have the king of diamonds, he will never duck. He will be looking at two sure tricks by going up ace, and he knows you are searching for the queen of clubs from the auction whether he has the queen or not. Thus, you will never steal past the ace of hearts when it matters.

Could there be an end-play? Possibly. You could do something like cash 3 spades discarding a diamond, and lead a heart up. West wins the ace and leads a heart back. You cash two hearts and play ace of clubs and take a club finesse, losing to West's doubleton queen. But even if West has nothing left but spades and diamonds, it looks like you are still a trick short. You can discard another diamond on a spade return and ruff in your hand, but you still won't survive East's 9 of clubs if East started with a doubleton diamond. It doesn't look like it can ever realistically work.

Is there any danger in trying the heart first? Yes, there is. Suppose East has the ace of hearts and Q9xx of clubs. He wins, and returns a heart. You will have to use all of your trumps to draw his trumps, so if the diamond finesse loses West will be able to cash a heart.

This time simple is best. You should just plan to draw trumps taking the percentage play.

Since all the finesses will be from dummy, you want to save your entries. You should win the first trick in your hand, retaining the king of spades entry.

You play small from dummy and win the ace of spades. Club to the ace, and a club off dummy. East plays the queen on the second round. You win, draw trumps, and try a heart. West goes up ace. When the diamond finesse later loses you make 11 tricks. The full hand is:

♠ K5		
♥ KQ42		
♦ Q106		
♣ A875		
♠ J97		♠ 108432
♥ AJ963		♥ 1085
♦ K3		♦ 985
♣ 964		♣ Q3
	<div> <div>W</div> <div>N</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ AQ6	
	♥ 7	
	♦ AJ742	
	♣ KJ102	

Do you like West's opening lead?

West can expect to score his ace of hearts and can assume he will be winning the king of diamonds or the defence won't have much chance. He

needs to find a third trick.

There are three reasons why West might lead the ace of hearts instead of a spade. They are:

To make declarer think he is cashing because he has the queen of trumps. On a different auction this might be reasonable. On this auction it is meaningless. West knows the defence owns the queen of clubs whether he has it or his partner has it. Declarer knows that, so he won't think that is the reason West is cashing the ace.

West might be giving East a heart ruff. This is possible if North has 4 hearts and South has 3. But if this is the heart layout West probably doesn't need to get the heart ruff, since he likely has a heart trick coming by going passive. Furthermore the ruff would be from his partner's Qx of clubs, ending the chance that declarer will misguess the trumps.

The ace of hearts might run away if not cashed. Where can it be going? The main assumption is that partner has Qx of clubs which he will score, which means that the opponents are in a 4-4 club fit. There is no logical distribution where declarer has a fast pitch of losing hearts from either his hand or dummy.

The conclusion is that there is no reason to lead the ace of hearts, and clearly the lead could blow a heart trick. West's relatively passive spade lead looks fine.

Many players are at a loss what to do with a hand such as South's. They know partner's approximate strength and hand type, and know they might be in the slam zone. Should they RKC, Q-bid, splinter, or what?

The key is to picture prototype hands partner might hold and see how various actions are likely to work. If you are contemplating bringing partner into the loop, make sure that he will be making the right decision. In a sense the captain should be bidding his partner's hand, also by picturing how partner will react to various approaches with different hands he might hold and whether or not his reaction will get the desired result.

It isn't always right to splinter just because you have a singleton. For example, suppose South had instead held: ♠Axx ♥x ♦AKJxx ♣KJ10x after the start of 1♦-2♣-3♣. Let's see how North might react to a splinter. Give North a hand such as ♠Qxx ♥Kxx ♦Qxx ♣AQxx.

What will North think?

4-3-3-3, minimum strength (North has shown 13-15 HCP), and the largely wasted king of hearts. He has good trumps, but he knows that South could have found out about those via RKC. North will hate his hand, and will not make any move if South makes a 4♥ splinter. Yet this is a pretty decent slam, and if North's hand were even slightly better (king of spades instead of queen) it would be a great slam. This is the sort of hand where South should be taking charge with RKC. He has the source of tricks in diamonds, and if North can produce the needed key cards, slam figures to be at worst on a finesse and might be a lot better. The splinter is wrong because partner is likely to react the wrong way.

On South's actual hand, RKC is wrong. There are plenty of hands North can hold which have enough key cards but slam will be pretty poor. But suppose South instead splinters. How will North react? There are 5 critical cards: king of spades, ace of hearts, king of diamonds, queen of clubs, and ace of clubs. North will know from the splinter that these are critical cards, and he will also know that the queen of diamonds has value. If North has 4 of them he will really like his hand and usually drive to slam, and slam is likely to be either cold or at worst on a diamond finesse if North has Kxx of diamonds. From North's point of view his hand couldn't be much better considering his previous sequence. But if North doesn't have 4 of these critical cards he will not drive to slam, and now slam figures to be at best on a finesse and possibly a lot worse. In other words, South can work out by looking at hands North might hold and how North will react with them that if South splinters North is likely to make the right decision.

On the actual hand, South got lucky that North didn't have the queen of clubs. If North had the queen of clubs instead of the queen of diamonds slam would have been reached, and it would have had no play at all. With proper visualization of hands North might hold, South should be able to picture this and avoid the poor RKC call.



# Sister Grace's Brainwave

by David Bird

It was rare nowadays to receive a handwritten letter. The Abbot stared at the sheet, recognising straightaway the spidery script of his distant cousin, Sister Grace.

*'You may regard it as too fanciful an idea,' she wrote, 'but the Mother Superior has agreed to it, much to my surprise. To celebrate the sixth centenary of our convent's founding, we have in mind a one-day pairs event for mixed partnerships. If you could manage to transport twelve of your monks to St Hilda's, we could have a random draw for partners with twelve of our nuns. What do you think? Of course, we would have to be discrete about it. The local papers would have a fine time if they found out.'*

The Abbot could find no objection to the idea. A draw for partners was not to his taste, it was true. With his luck he would surely be partnered by some convent novice with no idea of the game. Still, nothing could be done about that.

The Abbot wrote back, accepting the idea, and a few weeks later the participants were gathered in the convent's main cardroom. The Mother Superior performed the draw for partners and the Abbot was kept waiting for quite a while.

*'Next for St Titus, we have...'* called the Mother Superior, *'ah, the Abbot.'*

There was chatter around the room as the nuns remaining in the draw expressed their views of such a potential partnership. *'And he will play with... yes, Sister Thomas.'*

Could have been worse, thought the Abbot. Sister Thomas was a grim old bird but at least she knew how to play the game.

The draw continued and there were some barely suppressed smiles when the final pair out of the hat were Brother Cameron and the aged Mother of Discipline. Play started and this was an early board:

Dealer West. Both Vul.

		♠ 963	
		♥ 72	
		♦ J107	
		♣ QJ1063	
♠ 4			♠ QJ108
♥ KQJ9863			♥ 1054
♦ K93			♦ Q86
♣ 87			♣ 942
		♠ AK752	
		♥ A	
		♦ A542	
		♣ AK5	

West	North	East	South
The Abbot	Brother Paulo	Sister Thomas	Sister Colleen
3♥	Pass	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Sister Colleen, a white-faced Irish novice, won the ♥K lead with the ace. If trumps broke 3-2 there would be eleven easy tricks. Still, didn't the text books say that an opening three-bid nearly always contained a singleton? If this was in clubs or diamonds, the Abbot would doubtless have chosen it as his opening lead. It seemed to the young declarer that the Abbot might well hold a singleton trump and in that case she was in danger of losing control of the hand.

At trick 2, Sister Colleen led the ♠2. 'Play low,' she instructed Brother Paulo. Sister Thomas won with the ♠10, a mild deception to encourage declarer to think the trumps were 3-2. She returned a second round of hearts and declarer ruffed with the ♠5. Pursuing her intended line of play, Sister Colleen next played the ♠7. She smiled shyly at Brother Paulo when the

This was the deal before them:

“The four of clubs, please,” said the Mother Superior. She won with the queen and was about to repeat the trump finesse when a thought occurred



to her. Lucius was a tricky player. What if he had held up from K-x-x in the trump suit? She would then have no entry to her hand to rescue the situation with a diamond finesse. It was hardly practical to run the queen of diamonds now, because East might win and give partner a diamond ruff. What could be done?

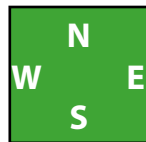
The Mother Superior soon spotted the necessary counter. She played the ♠A and discarded the ♣A from dummy. Only then did she lead a second round of trumps. When a spade discard came from West, she turned to smile at Brother Lucius. ‘Up to your old tricks?’ she said. ‘Just as well that I was awake to it.’ She rose with dummy’s ace of trumps and played a third round to East’s king. Lucius had no effective return. He led the ♦8, covered by the queen, king and ace. The Mother Superior then returned to her hand with the ♦J and discarded dummy’s two diamond losers on the ♣K and the ♠K. The slam was hers.

Brother Lucius nodded his congratulation. ‘You played it well,’ he said. ‘Against most pairs I dare say my hold-up in trumps would have borne fruit.’

Although the event was a social one and the celebration of a significant historical milestone, the Mother of Discipline saw no need to restrain her strict watch over the convent’s novices. Her much feared black punishment book was in its usual position beneath her scorecard as the players drew their cards for this board:

Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 6532	♠ Q 108	♠ KJ94
♥ 9743	♥ KQ82	♥ 5
♦ QJ85	♦ A72	♦ 10943
♣ 2	♣ 843	♣ AQJ9
	♠ A7	
	♥ AJ106	
	♦ K6	
	♣ K10765	



West	North	East	South
Mother of Discipline	Brother Zac	Brother Cameron	Sister Briana
–	–	1♣	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

The Mother of Discipline led the ♣2 and noted with disapproval the 4-3-3-3 shape of the dummy laid out by the black-bearded Brother Zac. Did Stayman make any sense on such a flat hand? Not as she saw it. If one of her novices had misbid in such fashion, despite her constant instruction on the matter, she would have been reaching for her black book.

Brother Cameron won with the ace of clubs and returned the club queen. The neatly groomed declarer covered with the king and did not think much of her luck when the Mother of Discipline ruffed. The ♠5 was returned. ‘Try the ten,’ she said.

Brother Cameron’s jack of spades drew declarer’s ace and trumps were drawn in three rounds. There was no way to avoid further losers in clubs and spades and the game went one down.

‘That will be two days on St. Iona’s regime,’ declared the Mother of Discipline, inscribing a note to that effect. ‘What must our guests think of such ill-considered and careless play?’

‘I don’t know, Reverend Mother,’ replied Sister Briana. Two days SI, just for the way she’d played a hand? Anyway, what could she have done differently? It wasn’t her fault that clubs had broken 4-1.

‘Think for just one moment and it’s obvious to play low at trick 2,’ persisted the Mother of Discipline. ‘If my partner plays a third club, you finesse the 10. I ruff but you then have two discards for dummy’s spade losers.’

Sister Briana had not taken the trouble to follow this. ‘That’s very clever, Reverend Mother,’ she replied. ‘I’ll never be able to play as well as you do.’

‘My partner made it easy for you by opening 1♣,’ declared the Mother of Discipline. She glared across the table. ‘Does the Abbot not insist that you open 1♦ when 4-4 in the minors? Now that I think about it, you didn’t even hold an opening bid.’

Brother Cameron maintained an impassive silence. What on earth was St Iona’s regime? He would have to ask one of the convent’s novices during the half-time refreshment break.

At a nearby table Brother Aelred was pleased to be partnering a rather attractive dark-haired novice, Sister Kiara. Had he drawn one of the more senior nuns, they would no doubt have expressed their opinions on his level of play. Perhaps he would have a chance to impress this youngster. He might even teach her a thing or two.

**Dealer West. N/S Vul.**

♠ 5  
♥ AQJ103  
♦ QJ32  
♣ AK4

♠ KJ982  
♥ 875  
♦ K106  
♣ 87

♠ 10643  
♥ 92  
♦ 987  
♣ QJ96

♠ AQ7  
♥ K64  
♦ A54  
♣ 10532

West	North	East	South
<i>Brother</i>	<i>Brother</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>Sister</i>
<i>Aelred</i>	<i>Damien</i>	<i>Kiara</i>	<i>Benedict</i>
1♥	1♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Somewhat surprised that the opponents had reached 3NT when he held such a good hand, Brother Aelred led the queen of hearts. Brother Damien, a St Titus novice who had not been favoured in the draw for partners, laid out his dummy.

‘Oh dear, is there a card missing?’ queried Sister Benedict. ‘Since we’re vulnerable, I expected you to hold an opening bid.’

‘Sorry, partner,’ replied Brother Damien. ‘I like to get into the auction whenever possible.’

East contributed the ♥2 to the first trick and Sister Benedict won with the king. Since the defenders had a copious number of hearts and clubs ready to take, she decided to cash the eight tricks at her disposal. When she

played the four spade honours, Brother Aelred discarded the  $\heartsuit 2$ , the  $\clubsuit 4$  and the  $\heartsuit 3$ . This position had been reached:

♠ —	♠ 9	♠ —
♥ AJ10	♥ 87	♥ 9
♦ QJ3	♦ K106	♦ 987
♣ AK	♣ 87	♣ QJ96

W

N

E

S

♠ —
♥ 64
♦ A54
♣ 10532

When dummy's last spade was played, Brother Aelred was in some difficulty. It was his normal practice to throw the lowest card in his hand, the  $\spadesuit 3$  on this occasion. Declarer surely held the  $\spadesuit A$ , however, and if he unguarded the  $\spadesuit QJ$  she would score three diamond tricks and make the contract. It was all very awkward.

After quite a while, Brother Aelred discarded the ♣K. When West threw such a high card, it seemed obvious to Sister Benedict that he must be retaining a diamond guard. She called for a club, won with West's ace, and Brother Aelred then cashed three heart tricks. When he switched to the ♦Q, Sister Benedict perked up a bit. She won with the diamond ace and finessed the ♦10 successfully. The ♦K then gave her the game.

‘Oh, well done, partner!’ exclaimed Brother Damien. ‘What a great play.’

Sister Benedict had rarely been complimented at the bridge table and found it quite a pleasant experience.



Sister Kiara was less happy. ‘Could you not lead the ♣A, partner?’ she suggested. ‘I would encourage a club continuation and then we take the first nine tricks.’

‘Yes, but I had 17 points,’ replied Brother Aelred. ‘I placed you with a yarborough when they bid to 3NT.’

It occurred to Sister Kiara that the contract might still have gone down after the ♥Q lead. Her partner could have discarded the ace and king of clubs, keeping his low club. Then he would have had a safe exit card. He could even have kept his low heart, allowing him to cross to her ♥9. Not that there was any future in trying to explain such matters. She had been hoping all week that she might spend a whole day in partnership with some experienced player such as Brother Lucius or the very good-looking Brother Paulo. Even partnering the Abbot would have been quite an adventure. Ah well, she would just have to make the most of playing against them for a few boards. ‘You’re absolutely right, partner,’ she said. ‘Sorry, I’d forgotten about that!’



**THE CYPRUS BRIDGE FEDERATION PRESENTS**  
**THE 30<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**  
 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL - 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018  
 AT THE ELIAS BEACH HOTEL IN LIMASSOL  
Director: Mr Demetris Ballas

**EVENTS PROGRAMME**

**FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
 Welcome drinks 5pm  
 Open pairs 1st session 6pm

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
 Open pairs 2nd session 6pm

**SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
 Open pairs 3rd session 6pm

**MONDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
 Open teams 1st session 6pm

**TUESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY**  
 Open teams 2nd session 4pm  
 Prize giving dinner 8.30pm

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATION**

Twin Room at €110.00  
 per room per night on bed and breakfast basis

Single Room at €80.00  
 per room per night on bed and breakfast basis

Sea view supplement at €8.00  
 per person per night

**ENTRY FEES (PER PERSON)**

	Non-CBF	CBF
Open Pairs*	€85	€60
Open Teams	€50	€30

\*Includes dinner on 1st May

**PRIZES**

	OPEN PAIRS	OPEN TEAMS
1 <sup>st</sup>	€1500 + trophies	€1500 + trophies
2 <sup>nd</sup>	€800 + trophies	€650 + trophies
3 <sup>rd</sup>	€400 + trophies	€350 + trophies
4 <sup>th</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup>	Cups	medals

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## Kursaal Oostende



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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 take a look at the opening round of matches in the Camrose Trophy.*

The Camrose Trophy is an annual bridge competition among open teams representing the home nations of Great Britain and Ireland: England (EBU), Northern Ireland (NIBU), Republic of Ireland (CBAI), Scotland (SBU) and Wales (WBU). As such it is the open teams-of-four component of the “Home Internationals” organised by Bridge Great Britain.

Lord Camrose, owner of *The Daily Telegraph*, donated the trophy in 1936 and it was first contested in 1937. The original trophy has been lost and replaced. Because of World War II the series was interrupted mid-way in 1939 and not resumed until 1946, yet the Camrose is the world’s most-played international bridge series.

Since 2007 there have been six rather than five teams in the competition, to avoid having one team sit out each round. From 2007 to 2009 the sixth team was the defending champion, so there were two teams from the previous year’s winning nation. England’s second team won in 2009, when it was the final-round host by coincidence. Since then by design the sixth team is a second team from the final-round host nation, which follows a five-year cycle from Northern Ireland in 2010 to England in 2014. That second representative is named for the national bridge federation; thus “Wales” and “Welsh Bridge Union” both entered in 2011.

Since 2005 a double round-robin is scheduled on two weekends. With six teams, each weekend comprises five rounds of three head-to-head matches, a single round-robin. A match is 32 deals scored at IMPs and converted to victory points. Every team plays 320 deals in the entire event, 64 against each of its rivals. Before 2005, the teams played head-to-head matches over five weekends.

Before 2007 there were simply five national teams, or four during the 48-year absence by the Republic of Ireland from 1951 to 1998.

The first weekend of the 2018 Camrose was played in Belfast. Here is how the teams lined up:

Scotland	Brian Short, Alan Goodman, Sam Punch, Stephen Peterkin, Mike Ash, Arend Bayer (NPC: Sandy Duncan)
N.Ireland	Rex Anderson, David Greenwood, Ian Hamilton, Sam Hall, Paul Tranmer, Wayne Somerville (NPC: John Ferguson)
CBAI	Ciaran Coyne, Peter Goodman, Enda Glynn, David Walsh, Gay Keaveney, Pat McDevitt (NPC: Diarmuid Reddan)
Ireland	Rory Boland, Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tommy Garvey, Tom Hanlon, Hugh McGann (NPC: Grainne Barton)
England	Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Jeffrey Allerton, Chris Jagger, Michael Byrne, Kieran Dyke (NPC: David Burn)
Wales	John Salisbury, Tim Rees, Jullian Pottage, Simon Richards, Paul Denning, Richard Plackett (NPC: Alan Stephenson)

In the first round England met N.Ireland, Wales faced Scotland and the CBAI took on Ireland. They encountered a challenging set of deals.

## The Hands

*(This month all the deals were played at IMPs.)*

### Hand 1. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ 7  
♥ 974  
♦ AJ65  
♣ AQ753



♠ A964  
♥ A3  
♦ KQ987  
♣ K4

## England v Northern Ireland

West	East
Somerville	Tranmer
–	1NT*
2♣*	2♦*
3NT	Pass

1NT 15-17  
 2♣ Puppet Stayman  
 2♦ No five-card major

I have never been a fan of opening 1NT with a 4-2-5-2 pattern and doing it here gave E/W no chance of reaching the excellent slam.

South led the five of spades from ♠K10852 ♥K102 ♦1043 ♣J10 and declarer took ten tricks, +430.

West	East
Allerton	Jagger
–	1♦
2♦*	2♠
3♣	3♥*
4♣*	4♦
5♦	Pass

2♦ Inverted raise  
 3♥ Cue-bid  
 4♣ Cue-bid

One Diamond promised at least four, so West had to choose between 2♣ and the inverted raise. After 2♦ East had the option of rebidding 2NT to show 15-19 balanced.

If West had bid 4♠ over 4♦ no doubt East would have driven to at least 6♦. If diamonds are 2-2 (or clubs 3-3) you can make 7♦.

*Recommended auction:* If East starts with 1♦ then it should not be too difficult to reach a slam. In the match between Scotland and Wales Punch and Peterkin bid 1♦-3♠\*-4♣\*-5♣\*-6♦ which was worth 11 IMPs when Rees and Salisbury stopped in game after 1♦-(1♠)-2♠\*-(Dble)-Rdbl-3♣-3♠\*-5♦. Moran and Boland also got home via 1♦-3♠\*-4♣\*-4♦-4NT\*-5♥\*-5NT\*-6♦ for a big swing against Goodman and Coyne's 1NT-2♣\*-2♠-3♣-3NT.


Starting with a splinter or 2♦ can't be bad, but the other possibility is to

respond 2♣. That might lead to this sequence: 1♦-2♣-2♠-4♦-4♥\*-4♠\*-5♣\*-5♦-5♠\*-6♦. East could ask for keycards over 4♠, but I think the first auction gives you a better chance of reaching a good grand slam (for example give West ♣AQ75).

Marks: 6♦10, 5♦/3NT 5, 7♦ 4.

Running score: England 5 (0) N. Ireland 5 (0) Wales 5 (0) Scotland 10 (11) CBAI 5(0) Ireland 10 (10)

## Hand 2. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 103		♠ AK82
♥ Q985		♥ AJ1043
♦ AK10984		♦ —
♣ A		♣ Q1084

North overcalls 1♠

## England v Northern Ireland

West	North	East	South
Somerville	Byrne	Tranmer	Dyke
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠*	Pass
4NT*	Pass	5♥*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

4♠ Cue-bid  
 4NT RKCB  
 5♥ 1 key cards

Trumps were 2-2 so it was easy enough to take all the tricks when North held ♠QJ974 ♥K6 ♦Q752 ♣K3.

West	North	East	South
Allerton	Greenwood	Jagger	Anderson
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4NT*	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

4♣ Splinter  
 4NT RKCB



*Recommended auction:* Having bid the slam on the previous deal Punch and Peterkin missed this one, East passing after 1♦-(1♠)-2♥-4♥. Salisbury and Rees got home when East went on with 4♠ and West asked for key-cards en route to 6♥. It was flat in the other match, but I liked the auction of Boland and Moran – 1♦-(1♠)-Dble\*-2♥-2♠\*-3♦-3♥-4♣\*-4♠\*-5♣\*-6♥.

If you are happy to splinter with a singleton ace (I would) then I prefer 4♣ to 4♥ as in the English pairs auction.

Marks: 6♥10, 4♥5, 7♥3.

Running score: England 15 (0) N. Ireland 15 (0) Wales 15 (13) Scotland 15 (11) CBAI 15 (0) Ireland 20 (10)

## Hand 3. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AQJ97	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 40px; background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; line-height: 40px;">             N W S E           </div>	♠ 108
♥ K8		♥ A107
♦ —		♦ J109876
♣ KJ8742		♣ A3

South opens 1♦ and if West bids 2♣ North bids 2♦

## England v Northern Ireland

West	North	East	South
Somerville	Byrne	Tranmer	Dyke
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♥	2♦	3♦*
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♣	All Pass

3♦ Heart support

East must have been confident West was 5-6 in spades and clubs, but was unwilling to go past game. South held ♠K63 ♥Q64 ♦A432 ♣Q106, so 6♣ was unbeatable (and so was 7♣).

West	North	East	South
Allerton	Greenwood	Jagger	Anderson
—	—	Pass	1♦
2♣	2♦	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass

South led the two of diamonds and North won and switched to the nine of

hearts. Declarer won in hand, ran the eight of spades, followed it with the ten for the king and ace and then played on clubs, taking the finesse for +690.

## Wales v Scotland

West	North	East	South
Rees	Ash	Salisbury	Bayer
—	—	Pass	1♣
1♠	Double	2♦	Double
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

The 1♣ opening bid made it virtually impossible to reach 6♣. Declarer took all the tricks.

West	North	East	South
Peterkin	Denning	Punch	Plackett
—	—	2♦*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥*	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

2♦ 4-9, 5+♦

2NT Enquiry

3♣ Non-minimum, no four card major

East's opening bid is a matter of taste, but if left West awkwardly placed as 2♠ or 3♣ would not have been forcing. He did well to look for a game when East's values might have been in diamonds and more or less worthless.

## CBAI v Ireland

West	North	East	South
Coyne	Garvey	Goodman	Carroll
—	—	Pass	1♣
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	All Pass

West	North	East	South
Boland	Keaveney	Moran	McDevitt
—	—	Pass	1♦
2♣	All Pass		

EW had already bid two excellent slams but when East saw no reason to respond to the overcall they fell well short. With ♣A3 East might have tried 2NT, but they would still be a long way from 6♣.

*Recommended auction:* Northern Ireland were the closest, but to reach 6♣ requires East to take a heroic view.

*Marks:* 6♣ 10, 3NT/5♣/4♠ 5, 2♣ 3.

*Running score:* England 20 (2) N. Ireland 20 (0) Wales 20 (15) Scotland 20 (11) CBAI 20 (10) Ireland 23 (10)

## Hand 4. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ AKQJ942		♠ —
♥ —		♥ K10432
♦ AKQJ10		♦ 654
♣ A		♣ KQ954



*South opens 4♥*

## England v Northern Ireland

West	North	East	South
Byrne		Dyke	
—	—	4♥	Pass
7♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
Redouble	All Pass		

North, who held ♠65 ♥6 ♦987 ♣J1087632 was not hard pressed to lead the jack of clubs and South's ruff was the setting trick.

What do you make of West's redouble?

I think it was an attempt to get partner to bid 7NT if he held the ace of hearts.

West	North	East	South
Greenwood		Anderson	
—	—	4♥	Pass
7♠	Pass	Pass	Dble
All Pass			

With the same lead the redouble had cost 3 IMPs, the only points England dropped in the set.

## Wales v Scotland

The contract at every other table was 7♠ doubled down one. Denning-Plackett reached it via an immediate 7♠, but the other auction was slower:

West	North	East	South
Ash	Salisbury	Bayer	Rees
—	—	Pass	4♥
5♥*	Pass	6♣	Pass
7♠	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

Every once in a while South might respond 6♦ when North can happily raise to 7♦. After the response of 6♣ suppose West bids 6♥? If South takes that as asking for a choice between spades and diamonds will he not bid 7♦?

*Recommended auction:* It was unlucky that South could ruff the club lead, but I wonder if West could have avoided it? Suppose he bids 7♥ over 4♥? What can that be other than a request for partner to bid 7♠ – and with South as declarer there is no ruff. For my money West does best to start with the 5♥ chosen by Mike Ash, but must then be a little more sophisticated.

*Marks:* 7♠ (E) 10, 7♠(W) 9, 6♠ 5.

*Running score:* England 30 (2) N. Ireland 30 (3) Wales 30 (15) Scotland 30 (11) CBAI 30 (10) Ireland 33 (10)

## Hand 5. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ AJ4		♠ K3
♥ 10		♥ AKQJ532
♦ AJ107		♦ 6
♣ AK974		♣ 1032



## England v Northern Ireland

West	East
Somerville	Tranmer
—	1♥
2♣	3♥
3♠*	4♣
4♦*	6♥
Pass	

It looks as if 3♠ and 4♦ were cue-bids. East might have bid 4♠, but West would still be unsure that there was not a minor suit loser.

South, who held ♠Q10985 ♥76 ♦542 ♣J85 led the eight of spades and when dummy's jack held East claimed all the tricks.

West	East
–	1♥
2♣	3♥
4♦	4♥
4♠	5♥
5♠	5NT
6♥	Pass

The BBO operator annotated West's 4♦ and 5♠ as 'thoughtful'. The convention card says that if hearts are trumps 4♠ (unless natural) is RKCB, so 5♥ showed two key cards and the ♥Q. If 5♠ was asking for kings presumably 5NT showed one, but that was not enough for West to contemplate a grand slam.

Here South led a diamond, but in due course declarer took the spade finesse to flatten the board.

## Wales v Scotland

West	East
<i>Peterkin</i>	<i>Punch</i>
–	1♥
2♣	3♥
4NT*	6♥
6NT	Pass

North led the ♦K and declarer won, cashed the top clubs, unblocked the ten of hearts, crossed to the king of spades and ran the hearts, squeezing South.

West	East
<i>Rees</i>	<i>Salisbury</i>
–	1♥
2♣	3♥
6NT	Pass

After the same opening lead declarer did not bother to cash the top clubs, but there were still thirteen tricks.

## CBAI v Ireland

West	East
<i>Coyne</i>	<i>Goodman</i>
–	4♥
4NT*	5♠*
5NT*	6♠*
7♥	Pass
4NT RKCB	
5♠ 2 key cards + ♥Q	
5NT Kings?	

South led the seven of hearts and declarer won with dummy's ten, cashed the ace of diamonds, ruffed a diamond high, drew trumps, cashed dummy's top clubs, ruffed a diamond and played trumps, pitching three clubs and a diamond from dummy, catching South in a show up squeeze.

West	East
<i>Boland</i>	<i>Moran</i>
–	1♥
2♣	3♥
6♥	Pass

South led the ten of spades, +1460.

*Recommended auction:* Notice that no-one opened 1♥ and rebid 4♥ – perhaps influenced by principle expounded by Eric Crowhurst that this should imply a fit for clubs. Opening 4♥ made life easy, but the absence of an eighth heart dissuaded anyone else from starting that way. Rebidding 3♥ shows at least six hearts and around seven playing tricks. If West discovers that East has the ♠K (or just a king) then 12 tricks would appear to be secure, and a grand slam cannot be worse than a finesse and might be considerably better (East might have the ♣Q or a doubleton club).

On balance I think you would like to be in 7♥ – is there a route after the bidding starts 1♥-2♣-3♥? Suppose West now bids 4♣? East can afford to bid 4♦ and when West continues with 4♠ it must be safe to bid 5♠. Now a bid of 5NT by West ought to be interpreted as the grand slam force (and not pick a slam).

*Marks:* 7♥10, 7NT 8, 6♥/6NT 5.

*Running score:* England 35 (2) N. Ireland 35 (3) Wales 35 (15) Scotland 35 (11) CBAI 40 (23) Ireland 38 (10)

## Hand 6. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ AJ1097  
♥ KJ2  
♦ Q10  
♣ 1043



♠ —  
♥ 965  
♦ AKJ3  
♣ AKQ986

### England v Northern Ireland

West	East
Greenwood	Anderson
—	1♣*
1♥*	2♦
3♣	3♠*
4♥*	4♠*
5♣	Pass
1♣	2+♣ natural or balanced
1♥	4+♠
2♦	Denies spade support
3♠	Cue-bid
4♥	Cue-bid
4♠	Cue-bid

I'm confident about my interpretation of the first three bids. If I am right about the subsequent part of the auction I'm a little surprised East didn't bid 6♣ – after all, couldn't West have held the ♥A?

South had started with ♠83 ♥AQ108 ♦987542 ♣J so there was no defence to 6♣.

West	East
Hinden	Osborne
—	1♣*
1♥*	2♦
3♣	3NT
Pass	
1♣	2+♣ natural or balanced (17) 18-19 (20), 10+ with 6♣, 11+ if balanced
1♥	4+♠
2♦	No spade fit

East's 3NT looks odd – potentially wrong siding the contract.

South led the ♥A so England gained a couple of IMPs.

In Wales v Scotland both tables reached 3NT, Short/Goodman via 1♣-1♠-2♦-2♠-3♣-3NT and Richards/Pottage after 1♣-1♠-2♦-3♣-3♥\*-3NT.

It was a similar story in the match between the CBAI and Ireland, Coyne/Goodman bidding 1♣-1♥\*-2♦-2♠-3♣-3NT and Garvey/Carroll 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♦-3♦-3NT. In the latter auction 1♣ was 11-13 or any 17+ and 1♠ was 8+. Logically 2♣ must have showed the strong hand, but I have no idea about the meaning of 2♦.

*Recommended auction:* Bidding after a reverse is perhaps one of the most problematical areas of bridge. After 1♣-1♠-2♦ you have to know what bids of 2♥, 2♠, 2NT, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 3♠ and 3NT mean. If you play 2♥ as fourth suit forcing then 3♣ becomes non-forcing. 2♠ is a fair suit but non-forcing; 2NT shows something decent in hearts but is non-forcing, 3♦ should be forcing; 3♥ should agree diamonds and 3♠ should be forcing, while 3NT is natural, promising 9+.

Many partnerships play Blackout, which enables the responder to indicate if he has better than a minimum response.

After	1♣	1♠
	2♦	2♥
		2♠
		2NT
		3♣
		3♦
		3♠
		3NT
		artificial, four ♠ and a minimum
		5+♠, forcing but not promising extras
		artificial, four ♠ and game forcing but unsuitable for a higher bid
		game forcing with 3+♣, at least mild slam try
		game forcing with 4+♦, at least mild slam try
		game forcing with 6+♠
		natural, with a stopper in ♥

For more examples go to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackout\\_convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackout_convention)

If you think the West hand is worth a mild slam try then you might start 1♣-1♠-2♦-3♣. If West then bids 3NT East might continue with 4♣, but it is not risk free.

*Marks:* 6♣(W) 10, 6♣(E) 8, 3NT/5♣ 5.

*Running score:* England 40 (4) N. Ireland 40 (3) Wales 40 (15) Scotland 40 (11) CBAI 45 (23) Ireland 45 (10)

## Hand 7. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q8  
♥ AK  
♦ A8653  
♣ 6543



♠ 7  
♥ J854  
♦ QJ  
♣ AKJ872

South opens 1♥ and if West passes North bids 1♠ which South raises to 2♠, North bidding 3♠

### England v Northern Ireland

West	North	East	South
Hinden	Hamilton	Osborne	Hall
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♠
2NT*	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♣	All Pass		

The convention card says '2NT L/R if no cue available'. With the opening bidder holding ♠AJ106 ♥Q10962 ♦K42 ♣10 stopping in a part-score with 6♣ available did not constitute par. It would make a good hand for the *Cui Culpa* series that Bill Pencharz used to write for Bridge Magazine or The Bridge World's *You be the Jury*.

In the other room North played in 4♠ doubled, which somehow went only one down, so England gained on the deal.

### Wales v Scotland

West	North	East	South
Goodman	Rees	Short	Salisbury
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♠
Double*	3♠	4♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

No doubt West's double suggested diamonds with club support. When East freely bid 4♣ West was happy to go on to game.

West	North	East	South
Pottage	Peterkin	Richards	Punch
–	–	–	Pass

1♦ Pass 2♣ Pass  
3♣ Pass 3♥ Pass  
3♠\* Double 5♣ All Pass

### CBAI v Ireland

West	North	East	South
Goodman	Hanlon	Coyne	McGann
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	2♠*	3♣	3♠
5♣	All Pass		
2♠ Weak			

West knew his partner must have a decent suit to come in at the three level, and was probably looking at most one spade but was short of room to investigate the possibility of a slam.

West	North	East	South
Carroll	Walsh	Garvey	Glynn
–	–	–	1♥
Pass	1♠	2♣	2♠
3♥*	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♣	All Pass		

3♥ Club support

Suppose East had bid 4♠ over 4♣? Is that enough for West to punt 6♣?

*Recommended auction:* Goodman-Short and Goodman-Coyne are fine – so is Hinden-Osborne – as long as one of them bids 5♣!

*Marks:* 6♣ 10, 4♠X 8, 5♣ 7, 4♣ 3.

*Running score:* England 43 (6) N. Ireland 48 (3) Wales 47 (15) Scotland 47 (12) CBAI 52 (29) Ireland 48 (10)

## Hand 8. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AJ62  
♥ Q1072  
♦ –  
♣ QJ982



♠ K4  
♥ K84  
♦ KQ  
♣ AK10754

North overcalls 1♠



## England v Northern Ireland

West	North	East	South
Hall	Hinden	Hamilton	Osborne
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	1♠	2♠*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠*	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

2♠ Club support

3♠ Game forcing, slam try

North led the ace of diamonds from ♠Q9873 ♥6 ♦AJ973 ♣63 and declarer ruffed and drew trumps. With the ♥J onside declarer was in clover.

I confess I don't find the auction convincing.

As an aside the N/S convention card says '(1m)-2m: 55+ in M WK+; (1M)-2M: 55+ in OM + ♦, Constructive +.' So it appears that North was not in a position to bid 3♣ to show spades and diamonds. Had she been in a position to do that doubtless South would have jumped to 5♦, which is very cheap against a game – and if East goes on to 6♣ North might find a heart lead.

At the other table N/S played in 5♦ doubled and went one down.

## Wales v Scotland

West	North	East	South
Salisbury	Goodman	Rees	Short
–	–	–	Pass
Pass	1♠	2♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

No opening bid from West, no negative double from South – the former plausible, the latter surprising.

West	North	East	South
Punch	Pottage	Peterkin	Richards
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	1♠	2NT*	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♥*	Double
Pass	Pass	6♣	All Pass

2NT Club support

4♦ Splinter

4♥ Cue-bid

It is possible that 4♦ promised a void.

North led the six of hearts and South won with the ace and returned the ten of spades – oops.

## CBAI v Ireland

West	North	East	South
McGann	Goodman	Hanlon	Coyne
–	–	–	Pass
2♦*	Pass	2NT	4NT*
Pass	5♦	Double	All Pass

2♦ 11-16, 4-4-1-4/ 4-4-0-5/4-3-1-5/3-4-1-5

2NT Asking, invitational plus

4NT Weak two-suiter

Declarer ruffed the club lead in dummy, played a diamond to the ace and claimed ten tricks.

West	North	East	South
Glynn	Carroll	Walsh	Garvey
–	–	–	Pass
1♣	1♠	2♠*	3♥
Pass	3♠	3NT	All Pass

2♠ Club support

South led a diamond, but declarer could cash nine tricks after winning the second round of the suit.

*Recommended auction:* 6♣ is nothing special, but give either player the hxJ and you would like to be in it. Do you go for Hall-Hamilton or Salisbury-Rees? I think the Welshmen have it by a whisker.

*Marks:* 5♣/3NT 10, 6♣ 6, 5♦X(N/S) 5.

*Running score:* Running score: England 48 (6) N. Ireland 54 (16) Wales 57 (15) Scotland 53 (23) CBAI 62 (36) Ireland 53 (10)

Despite doing well on these deals, Northern Ireland lost 31-94 or 1.39-18.61 VP to England; Wales went down to Scotland 44-57, 7.40-12.-60 VP and CBAI were defeated by Ireland, 61-64, 9.35-10.65.

At the end of the first weekend England's 64.03 put them in pole position, ahead of the CBAI on 59.10 with Ireland next on 53.47.

You can see the detailed results at:

<http://www.fob.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Camrose-2018-Leaderboard-After-Weekend-One.pdf>

You can play through the deals mentioned in this article.

Just follow the links:

Hands 1,2,3, 4 & 5

[here](https://tinyurl.com/ych3zxod) or <https://tinyurl.com/ych3zxod>

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Hands 6, 7& 8

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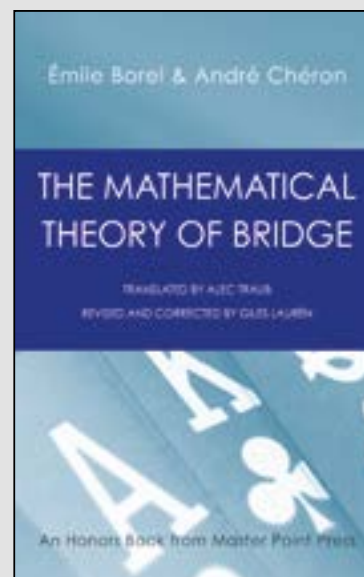
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THE BRIDGE PUBLISHER

## THE MATHEMATICAL THEORY OF BRIDGE

BY ÉMILE BOREL AND ANDRÉ CHÉRON

*Translated by Alec Traub  
Revised and Corrected by Giles Laurén*



**134 Probability Tables, Their Uses, Simple Formulas, Applications & 4000 Probabilities**

Originally published in 1940, and revised in 1954, this classic work on mathematics and probability as applied to Bridge first appeared in English translation in 1974, but has been unavailable for many years. This new edition corrects numerical errors found in earlier texts; it revises the previous English translation where needed and corrects a number of textual and typographical errors in the 1974 edition. Tables have been included again in the text, as they were in the original edition. The chapter on Contract and Plafond scoring has been retained as continuing to serve its intended purpose. The chapters on shuffling, although no longer applicable to Duplicate Bridge, are included for the benefit of those interested in the mathematics of all card games. All, it is hoped, without too many new errors being introduced.

Émile Borel

Émile Borel (1871-1956) made contributions to mathematics, it can be argued, that introduced our era of probabilistic, quantitative decision making, so adaptable to the computer and thereby so pervasive today. He published more than fifty papers on probability, game theory, and was first to define games of strategy.

André Chéron

André Chéron (1895-1980) was a top-ranked chess player of the generation of Capablanca (1888-1942); both he and Capablanca turned to bridge as a 'more interesting game' in the 1930s.

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## The Master Point Press Bidding Battle

### Set 1

Moderated by Alan Mould

A new year, a new magazine, a new title. All things change. However, what has not changed is the quality of our panel and their insights into our game. This month problem 1 is from frequent contributor Martin Cantor and comes from the German equivalent of the English NICKO (the national inter-club competition); hands 2 and 3 are from Marc Smith; hand 4 was sent to me by Iain Sime, hand 5 was sent to me by Manchester expert and friend Rodney Lighton and comes from a local duplicate; hand 6 was held by my partner Ollie Burgess in a local league match; hand 7 is from this year's English Premier League and was sent to me by John Matheson; and finally hand 8 is again from Marc Smith. A slightly reduced panel of 18 this month – I would say too much Christmas turkey but I am writing this before Xmas. On we go....

### PROBLEM 1

**IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul**

♠ A9876  
♥ 2  
♦ A1098754  
♣ —

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
?			

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Two Hearts	10	10
Two Diamonds	9	8
Four Diamonds	9	0
Three Diamonds	3	0
One Spade	2	0

## THE BIDS & MARKS

	Bid	Marks	No. of Votes		Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
1.	Two Hearts	10	10	5.	Double	10	8
	Two Diamonds	9	8		2NT	9	4
	Four Diamonds	9	0		Three Hearts	9	6
	Three Diamonds	3	0		Pass	2	0
	One Spade	2	0		3NT	1	0
2.	Pass	10	10	6.	Four Spades	10	16
	5NT	9	3		Six Diamonds	9	1
	Five Hearts	8	2		Four Hearts	7	1
	Five Spades	8	1		4NT	6	0
	4NT	7	1		5NT	6	0
	Five Clubs	7	1		Five Diamonds	1	0
	Six Clubs	1	0	7.	Pass	10	10
	Six Spades	1	0		Three Hearts	8	3
	6NT	1	0		3NT	8	3
3.	Three Hearts	10	9		Four Diamonds	8	1
	2NT	9	2		Three Spades	7	1
	Three Clubs	9	3		Four Clubs	2	0
	Four Clubs	8	1	8.	Three Clubs	10	8
	Four Hearts	8	2		2NT	9	7
	Six Hearts	8	1		3NT	7	3
4.	3NT	10	9		Four Hearts	2	0
	Three Spades	9	6		Three Hearts	1	0
	Three Hearts	8	2				
	Four Clubs	6	1				
	Any other bid	1	0				





**Alan Mould - your Moderator**

*Well this problem proved to be a damp squib! We have elected to pass a very shapely hand with lots of playing strength but below the “normal” HCP limits (indeed EBL and WBL regulations would not permit you to systemically open a hand any weaker than this in term of high card strength). I invited the panel to comment on this and many did, occasionally quite vociferously! Having passed, we can now bid what we want, and as much as we want, having limited out high card strength. However, the panel were split almost exactly between a simple overcall in diamonds, intending to bid spades come Hell or high water, or Michaels, getting in the five spades, but leaving partner in the dark as to which minor we have—which may well be disastrous. Personally,*

*I think both of these approaches are sub-optimal, but more of that later. Michaels got the 10 votes out of 18 so let's start with them:*

**Bird:** Two Hearts. Seems OK for Michaels. If you start with Two Diamonds, you will be committed to bidding spades later, at whatever the level, and this could prove unfortunate.

*Is that not equally true the other way round, David? Are we going to leave a suit of A10987xx on the shelf for the entire auction? Imagine partner holding ♠Kx ♥xxx ♦Kxx ♣xxxxxx. He will not be bidding over Four Hearts by the opponents and we seem to have slam cold, let alone game. It seems to me that if you Michaels on this hand, you are committed to getting these diamonds in no matter what.*

**Smith:** Two Hearts. I'm not a fan of Michaels with a two card difference between the suits. The problem with overcalling in diamonds, though, is that it fairly well commits me to bidding spades on the next round over North's presumed heart raise, no matter what level, and this hand simply is not good enough when that might mean bidding at the four level. This is a good hand if we have a fit, but a 5-3 spade fit when I will get forced immediately isn't really enough, so I'll Michaels and leave things to partner.

*As I say, surely Michaels commits you to bidding diamonds...*

**Alder:** Two Hearts. Yes, I would have opened One Diamond. Now, though, if I am given the room, I can bid diamonds next to show 5-6 or 5-7 and partner will know I do not have a high point-count.

*Michael treats you to a lengthy analysis and then some vitriol...*

**Byrne:** Two Hearts. Michaels Cue Bid, spades and a minor...and then some! I don't consider this to be very tricky, since the only possible way I can show my enormous playing strength is by showing

a two suiter and then bidding again (*Really? Surely, you can bid diamonds and then spades, at the four level if need be. That just might show enormous playing strength as well*). As regarding whether or not I would have opened, it could scarcely have been more obvious than to open One Diamond. I am frequently asked by devotees of the Rule of 19 “how low do opening bids actually go down to?” (*For our non-English readership the “rule of 19” is a particularly idiotic part of the rules in England which states that the minimum for an opening bid is that the HCP plus the number of cards in the two longest suits must add up to at least 19*) I always reply that there are some wild hands with two aces that sometimes merit an opening bid, this hand surely falls into that category. Imagine the hand is passed out, partner holding ♠Kx ♥Axx ♦Kxx ♣xxxxx, not wanting to open an anti-lead directing One Club in third seat, “I only had two aces” I will casually tell him as he scores up -17 IMPs with team-mates who have conceded the inevitable -1540.

*As you can see Michael, not everyone thinks it “could scarcely have been more obvious to open One Diamond”:*

**Cannell:** Two Hearts. Spades and a minor. At least I get both suits involved (*well partner knows you have two suits, but not which minor....*). Pass originally for sure.

**Bowyer:** Two Hearts. I certainly would have passed originally and am happy to show a major-minor two-suiter now.

*I would be happy (well a bit happier) if I could show spades and diamonds, but...*

*Andrew agrees with Michael:*

**Robson:** Two Hearts. Michaels. Perfection (*Really?*) and now pleased I didn't open One Diamond (which I undoubtedly would have).

*Joey has a pre-emptive moan about a problem to*

*come. Pre-emptive moaning is a tactic I will try and take up I think. When partner is about to comment on me flooring a cold game on board 5 I will pre-empt him by saying "Well, that is nothing to what you will do on board 14".*

**Silver:** Two Hearts. Two aces, and a five loser is an opening bid in my book. This is certainly a more powerful One Diamond opening than the junky One Diamond opening on problem 4 (11 points, 3 controls, 8 losers). I might as well take advantage of the fact that I previously passed, and get across the two suited nature of my hand (not to mention my five card spade suit) despite the length disparity between diamonds and spades.

*Sally treats us a scary insight into her philosophy:*

**Brock:** Two Hearts. If I wasn't going to try to show my spades I would have opened Four Diamonds in the first place (which I might have done anyway).

*A four level pre-empt with two aces AND a side FIVE card major—the old masters will be spinning like tops in their graves, but the game has changed an awful lot since their time...*

*OK, on to the simple Two Diamond overcallers. John makes pretty much all of the points I was making above and, like his fellow countryman, has a pre-emptive moan:*

**Carruthers:** Two Diamonds. While I realize this hand is eligible for Michaels, that won't be so good if North bids Four Hearts, or if South raises himself to Four Hearts. Then I'd be trapped. Whereas, if I instead bid Two Diamonds, they cannot shut me out of spades, which I'm willing to commit to at the four level. And they are certainly going no higher than Four Hearts, at least not before I get another chance. Having said all that, you might infer that I would have preferred a different initial action, i.e., One Diamond. Yes, I would, strongly. I have about a 4½ loser with two aces—what more

do I need for an opening bid? Contrast that with the dreck for an opening bid you saddle us with on Problem 4: ♠J10 ♥KJ4 ♦Q1053 ♣A1065. That's an eight-loser opening bid and this one is not an opening bid? Please.

*I get sent problems—different people have different opening styles. Give me a break!*

**Sime:** Two Diamonds. Might as well bid my suits showing the longer first. I would have opened One Diamond. "Twice armed is he whose cause is just, thrice armed is he who gets his blow in first." Was that Shakespeare or Zar?

*Neither I think. "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just, but four times he who gets his blow in first." 19th century US humourist Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw).*



**John Carruthers**

**Lawrence:** Two Diamonds. I'll continue bidding. This start assures that I can get spades in the game while confirming my other suit. Opening the bidding is tempting but I'd like to be in a partnership that opens very light.

**Kokish:** Two Diamonds. There will be more bidding and I will bid spades through the four-level, perhaps with a jump. Emphasizing the length disparity could be crucial. I would have opened One Diamond, but passing was not a deal-breaker for me, so to speak.

**Apteker:** Two Diamonds. Planning on bidding spades next, to at least Four Spades. I agree with the initial pass as this hand is slightly too light for a one-level opening.

**Rigal:** Two Diamonds. Initial pass is fine by me. I'd bid Two Diamonds now and Four Spades later in all probability. Yes, I'm painting the opponents a picture and setting myself up for -800 but 7-5 come alive...

**Teramoto:** Two Diamonds. I will bid Four Spades later probably. The diamonds are too long to consider Michaels.

**Wolff:** Two Diamonds. With no second choice, although I know the flag is up and waving with the possibility of this hand catching a fire. I'll, of course, bid Four Spades later if I have to, but as a matter of fact I am looking forward to just that!

*Last word to Ben, who makes some technical points that I want to expand on:*

**Green:** Two Hearts. I would have scraped up a One Diamond opening bid with this hand. Now that I have passed I have a few choices. Two Hearts shows the fifth spade but loses the sixth and seventh diamond (though I may get a chance to bid my diamonds again later). A direct Three Diamonds for me (only as a passed hand) shows seven diamonds and four spades else why didn't I open Three



Diamonds? With six diamonds and four spades I would not jump to Three Diamonds when vulnerable. The only downside is that this loses the fifth spade and if we do have a game on it may well be in spades. That leaves a simple Two Diamond hoping to bid spades later, but will partner believe that I have five when I have not made a Michaels cue-bid? Probably not.

*Unless you are French, it is a well-established principle that if you pass and then make a jump overcall, you must have a side four card major, otherwise you would have opened with a pre-empt. So, Three Diamonds here would show 7-4 in the pointed suits as Ben says (6-4 if non-vul). How can we get in the fifth spade other than Michaels. Given that ALL of the Two Diamond bidders are intending to bid Four Spades at some point, and many of the Two Hearts are intending to bid diamonds if they can (surely to the four level?) then how about Four Diamonds over One Heart? We have passed originally so cannot have simply a four level pre-empt and then now leap in at this level. Surely this must therefore be Leaping Michaels, and at this vul will be five spades and at least six diamonds, probably seven. Bingo! I think this is the right bid and there is no reason why partner should not be able to work it out at the table. I have thus taken the unique step in my tenure of awarding it the same mark as a bid that a panellist actually made. Since it was a two horse, neck and neck, race anyway, everyone gets plenty of marks. Partner's hand, by the way, was ♠Jxx ♥Q ♦KJxx ♣Axxxx. The opponents make Five Hearts as diamonds are 2-0, whereas you lose three tricks in diamonds or four in spades if they can find the ruff, and so have a paying save in either suit.*

## 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		

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Pass	10	10
5NT	9	3
Five Hearts	8	2
Five Spades	8	1
4NT	7	1
Five Clubs	7	1
Six Clubs	1	0
Six Spades	1	0
6NT	1	0

*Well I have to say that I am surprised at the panel here. Yes, we clearly have a misfit with partner looking like he has as many major suit cards as we have minor suit cards, but we do after all have an EXTREMELY good hand, up to and including very good pips. Presumably, we would bid exactly the same way with say ♠—♥Ax ♦KQJxx ♣KQ10xxx and this hand is a lot, lot better than that, particularly if we are going to play in a major. Nevertheless, more than half of the panel take the conservative route (unusually for them) and table the dummy. Most think it is pretty clear:*

**Wolff:** Pass. And hope for no more than three losing tricks. For partner to have less than two losers in his suits would not be my intention to

follow-up. My guess is that he is 7-5 with an undisclosed minor suit card. However, although I figure to have a better overall hand than he (if not he wouldn't have only bid Four Spades). To bid on is lemming like, a desire to go set gracefully.

**Robson:** Pass. Partner has six good spades and five medium hearts. I'm taking the plus on the misfit.

**Bird:** Pass. I have shown my suits and he tells me he likes the look of Four Spades. Going any higher would be a gamble.

**Lawrence:** Pass. This may be our last makeable game. When partner bid Three Hearts, he was hoping I had three of them. My Four Diamonds bid defined my hand as 6-5 or similar.

**Smith:** Pass. I've shown at least 5-6 in the minors and partner still wants to play in spades. It sounds like he is 6-5-1-1 or 7-5-(1-0) so it's time to stop bidding. This huge misfit probably won't play as well as the high point count suggests.

**Apteker:** Pass. Expecting something like 7-5-1-0 shape. While this may be pessimistic and slam could be on, I am unclear how best to proceed as it feels too unsafe to venture into murky territory with this big misfitting hand. I do not expect partner's spades to be playable opposite a void or singleton for one loser e.g. KQJ10xx as he might practically have bid Three Spades at his second turn and given up on hearts. I therefore do not believe we will miss a slam in spades but might do so in NT, diamonds or clubs.

**Green:** Pass. Partner could have one or two cards in the minors and I have shown my shape and partner has decided to go back to spades. I hope he is 7-5 and this is our last making spot.

*Your shape, yes Ben, but hardly your power including all the tops.*

**Teramoto:** Pass. This looks like a misfit and we

should stop!

**Brock:** Pass. Don't like these methods. It stinks of a true misfit. Would have bid 3NT over Three Hearts.

*All I can say is that I think these methods are pretty mainstream and widespread (which is why I went with this treatment). I know that many of the top UK players such as Gold, Bakhshi, Forrester, Robson etc play this way. And what else do you use a jump in the fourth suit for? As I recall you use it as a splinter in partner's first suit and support for the second. Maybe very sensible, but it is far from mainstream.*

**Bowyer:** Pass. Utterly repulsive problem but this might be the last chance of a plus score. Partner is looking like he is 6-5-1-1 or similar and I can't retreat to 3NT. If I could arrange to play in 4NT I'd do that but I can't.

*Oh, can you not? John thinks you can and calls it "a cry of desperation". Desperation on this hand? John is also more vociferous in his complaints about the methods:*

**Carruthers:** 4NT. A cry of desperation. I hope Partner is not a "4NT is always Blackwood" guy. I'm not passing Four Spades when he did not insist on spades with a jump to Three Spades, then repeating them at Four Spades, or by jumping to Four Spades over Two Diamonds. Instead, he showed a more-flexible hand type – his spade suit is therefore not solid enough for me to pass. What a curious treatment for Three Hearts. I can understand the jump to Three Hearts describing a 5-5 invitational hand on a one-over-one or a non-reverse, but this is a bit much. However, on a reverse auction, the reverser always has his own two suits or a fragment in my first-bid suit; the fourth suit is rarely a playable strain, so why waste the space and get in partner's way

by jumping in a suit that will never be trumps? Perhaps someone can enlighten me. And, on the rare instances Opener has, say 1=3=4=5 on this auction, he can raise Two Hearts to Three Hearts or bid 2NT, whichever is appropriate to his system.

*Two Hearts would be Blackout, almost always denying five spades John. That is standard these days surely? Anyway, onto the others who do not pass. Michael finds this a tough hand (I agree!) and gives the third longest answer from anyone this set:*

**Byrne:** Five Clubs. One of the toughest of the set. So much so that I shall answer the rest and then come back to it..... Now this is an interesting problem, caused in part by this space stealing jump to Three Hearts, a convention I have never played or been tempted to use. Four Diamonds presumably showed 6-5 (although could it have been a cue-bid on 1-3-4-5 shape? Hardly with no club control) so is Four Spades a cue-bid or an effort to play? It looks like partner is 6-5, in which case I have no idea how many points he has. What is "game-forcing" when facing a reverse? Does ♠KQ10xxx, ♥QJ9xx qualify? Rarely have I written an answer with so many questions in it so it is time to offer some conclusions. I think this hand will play terribly so my usual policy of bashing a slam seems too much, whatever it means Five Clubs at least puts the ball in partner's court. Don't ask me what is going to happen next, I couldn't tell you if I wanted to.

*Three Canadians bid five of a major – how cute! Eric gives the second longest answer of anyone this set. It must be a decent problem if he has generated so much thought.*

**Kokish:** Five Hearts. Lovely problem. West had no way over Three Hearts to show slam interest in hearts below the five level, as 4m would be



**Michael Byrne**

NAT and 4NT stronger than 3NT. The fact that Three Hearts is described as FG does not suggest whether it is FG because of West's reverse or depicts an opening bid in its own right, so its utility is questionable. As Four Diamonds has in turn endplayed poor East (can anyone state convincingly what 4NT by East would mean over Four Diamonds, or the maximum for Five Clubs or Five Diamonds?) it's simply a bad auction. Sure, we can argue that if East wanted to play in spades facing shortage he would not bid Three Hearts, so that Four Spades "must be" a hand too strong for Five Clubs or Five Diamonds, but it would be unrealistic to expect everyone to think along these lines. Nonetheless, as I believe East did not bid Three Hearts to finish in Four

Spades on his own, I am not going to succumb to the shoulder-shrugging pick-six 5NT crutch, and will continue to show my shape and full value for my bidding.

*Fair enough! Drew agrees:*

**Cannell:** Five Hearts. Preference. I have basically shown my exact pattern for partner, as well as, the strength (*unconvinced about that!*). Ball is in partner's court now.

**Silver:** Five Spades. Hard to understand what partner is up to. I reverse (showing a powerful hand) and before letting me bid my hand out, partner cuts across my lines of communication, and pre-empts the auction. So obviously on the auction my OX doesn't need much (if any) help with his suits from me, and has a decent six or seven card spade suit. The question is "how good?", so with all my aces, and heart support (sort of), I'll risk the five level in order to try to score up that vulnerable slam bonus.

*Three drive a slam:*

**Sime:** 5NT. I think that I have told my story regarding suit lengths. However, all these pips make slam appealing, so I will let partner choose.

**Rigal:** 5NT. I would have bid 3NT over Three Hearts I think. Now maybe we have no fit at all but 5NT might get us to the best strain. Passing is too big (or small) a call for me.

**Alder:** 5NT. Pick a slam, partner. This is an overbid, but partner probably won't read 4NT as natural.

*OK, partner had.... We will find out in two months time when this hand re-appears with a different auction.*

## PROBLEM 3

**IMPs. Dealer West. None Vul**

♠ AK865  
♥ AKQJ4  
♦ A  
♣ 75

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Three Hearts	10	9
2NT	9	2
Three Clubs	9	3
Four Clubs	8	1
Four Hearts	8	2
Six Hearts	8	1

*This hand has interested me for a number of reasons. I invited the panel to comment on whether they would have preferred a different opening (i.e. whether they would have opened Two Clubs) and many of them did comment. It seems to me that one of the biggest divergences in the expert community today is what you do and do not open Two Clubs on. I am unclear quite why this should be so, but I suspect it is to do with Two Club openers coming up so rarely that even seasoned partnerships do not talk about them enough. As you will see from the panel answers below, every variant from "Not close to Two Clubs" to "Automatic Two Club opener" is given by the panel, adding weight to my argument. Anyway, back to the problem. We have opened One Spade and got a raise—usually good news, but as Mike Lawrence says this has curiously made it harder in some ways. How now do we develop this hand given that we have strain and level to be concerned about, and also tactical considerations? Exactly half*

*the panel are "straight men" and bid their other suit:*  
**Byrne:** Three Hearts. Long suit trial for spades. I intend to bid Four Diamonds over Three Spades and see if partner can squeak, as he will do with a club control and good trumps (either Qxxx or QJx). I wouldn't have opened Two Clubs since my longest suit is not my best (well you know what I mean, 5/5 I have to bid spades first) since that will leave no room for exploring strain when partner has say ♠xxx ♥xxxx ♦Kxx ♣Axx where Six Hearts is cold and Six Spades goes down on trumps 4-1. An auction starting Two Clubs—Two Diamonds—Two Spades—Three Spades is locked into spades, and that feels a little restrictive to me.

**Cannell:** Three Hearts. A natural force to begin with. Cue-bidding diamonds, etc. next. I will key on the club weakness for both partner and opponents. I like One Spade for development of the auction—also, only eight tricks—not nine for a Two Club opener.

**Bowyer:** Three Hearts. It's possible partner has these and we can make a large number of hearts. For now, let's see if partner can make a useful contribution. Might I have opened Two Clubs? Yes, I might, although pre-emption from the opposition in the minors would have made the hand awkward. It's close.

*So, no, no, maybe for Two Clubs so far. Now we have three for yes:*

**Carruthers:** Three Hearts. To be followed by a diamond control-bid over Three Spades or Four Spades. If he surprises me with Four Clubs, I'll invoke Roman Key Card Blackwood. If he bids Four Diamonds, I'll reluctantly let him go with Four Spades; on that auction, since he'd have denied club control, if I bid Four Hearts, I'd also be promising club control, not offering him a choice. The way to offer him a choice of spades



and hearts is simply to jump to Four Hearts, not appropriate here, or perhaps to Six Hearts later. Even though I open Two Clubs fewer times than most, I would have opened Two Clubs here. In deciding whether to open with Two Clubs or a one-bid, I've found it useful to ask myself two questions: (1.) Would a four-triple-three Yarborough produce a decent play for game? and (2.) Is there a real danger of my one-bid being passed out? If the answer to both questions is yes, I open Two Clubs. Here, 3=3=3=4 produces a good play for Four Spades and a slightly better play for Four Hearts. With 20 HCP and eight of the 12 controls, there is a real danger of it's going All-Pass if I open One Spade: place the other 20 HCP 9=2=9 in balanced hands around the table, for example.

**Sime:** Three Hearts. Over Three Spades, I'd like to bid 3NT Serious Slam try. If that isn't in my armoury, I will bid Four Diamonds. Not having opened Two Clubs, I have a lot of catching up to do. At least partner didn't pass One Spade; put this hand opposite a Yarborough and game is favourite.

**Teramoto:** Three Hearts. Hearts may be a better contract than spades. I would have opened Two Clubs.

*Most vociferous in his dislike of One Spade is Andrew, but not because he thinks you should open Two Clubs:*

**Robson:** Three Hearts. Abstain (put me down for Three Hearts). Would have opened One Heart, as if partner has two small in each major I so want to play hearts, also I like to play 2NT after One Spade – Two Spades as any slam try.

*No one else mentioned this, but the man has a seriously valid point. Every time partner has equal length in your suits, the disparity in quality means it is better to play in hearts; if partner has one more*

*spade than hearts it is probably as good, if not better, to play in hearts. Only if partner has two or more cards more in spades than in hearts will it be right to play in spades, and that will be found out during the auction. All sensible.*

*Whilst for us Three Hearts is initially just a game try, Sally (and Andrew above) has a modern toy at her disposal:*

**Brock:** Three Hearts. I think I have to bid this as it is moderately likely that hearts will play better than spades. For me Three Hearts = natural slam try. The trouble is that I'm asking partner to value a doubleton heart, and downgrade xxx when I don't really care about hearts at all.

*How then do you show a game try? The usual toy here is to bid 2NT and partner will bid the lowest suit he would reject a try in. Other methods are available, such as...*

**Kokish:** Three Hearts. I have no doubt that Two Clubs would be the heavy-consensus expert choice with this three loser hand (*nope!!*), but I prefer One Spade in partnerships in which passing a one-bid would be extremely rare. Representing this hand as a strong two in spades with a poor suit for the genre is not an insignificant flaw. There might not be enough time to show both suits safely or accurately if the bad guys can do some damage in a minor. The peculiar minor suit holdings suggest showing controls rather than shortage and the hand type speaks for treating new suits as game forcing rather game tries, which would permit East to wait with Three Spades or show a control with a four card fit for hearts. Without such luxuries the auction will often be difficult: for example, if Three Spades is NF, should Four Clubs set hearts, Four Diamonds set spades with slam suitability? Or should 4m specify that control without specifying a trump suit. In real life I would

bid 2NT, suggesting a relatively BAL hand while asking responder to name the cheapest strain in which he would reject a long-suit trial bid, intending to follow with a NAT slam try in hearts. Quite a complicated hand.

*All these methods involving a forcing 2NT are only possible of course in a SNT system (which we now play). In an Acol based, WNT system you need 2NT as a natural NF game try. Mike and Ben do start with 2NT, Mike expressing the problems well.*

**Lawrence:** 2NT. Yes to Two Clubs. Not that it's clear. It's that One Spade creates more subsequent turbulence in the bidding. As to what to bid over Two Spades, this is a major headache. I'll try 2NT, forcing, here. The reason is unclear, but at least I will learn if partner has three or four spades. More bidding will come. The next bid will be equally litigious. We could be cold for Seven Hearts facing ♠Qxx ♥xxxx ♦xxx ♣Axx and game could be our max facing ♠Jxx ♥xxx ♦KQxx ♣Jxx (Heck, game might go down on this layout). The idea of bidding Three Clubs is lead deflecting only.

**Green:** 2NT. Asking for more information (not showing a balanced hand). A Four Diamond splinter seems wrong as partner won't believe that we have the ace and opposite the king of diamonds and ace of clubs we make a slam. Three Hearts does not seem to achieve anything as partner won't have help in hearts. I would hope that partner might bid Three Clubs as that would improve my hand. For me I would open Two Clubs and it's not close. Starting with a game force would allow me to get both suits in economically as well as the strong nature of this hand. There is a chance that One Spade could be passed out with game completely solid picture three little spades and nothing else.

*Three try Mike's "lead deflecting" Three Clubs. To be fair, it is the suit you really need help in, but*

*Joey and Bobby certainly have larceny in their hearts:*  
**Silver:** Three Clubs. I intend to bid slam (while discouraging a club lead) should partner hold good spades, so I will show my phony club suit in an attempt to find out. Opening Two Clubs with a two suited hand is too bulky holding a borderline two bid. By opening Two Clubs, I will find myself

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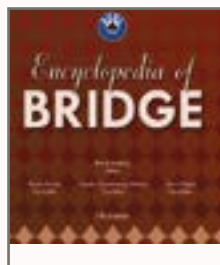
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at too big a disadvantage in the NOT unlikely event that the Villains decide to pre-empt in one of the minors.

**Wolff:** Three Clubs. The purpose of this round is to enable myself to make the most number of tricks possible when I declare. Yes, it isn't this round of bidding which will enable my final level of my auction, but I think a worthwhile attempt to bid something useful. I have already taken the science out of my partnership final resting stop, and will decide that later and I fully realize that hearts could fairly easily enable an extra trick for me, but those kind of thoughts, while at the table, are not as valuable compared to what chicanery may glean. Yes, I would open Two Clubs, but now that I didn't I prefer what happened.

**Apteker:** Three Clubs. Intending to bid 4NT over a Four Spade response and meekly raising to Three Spades over Three Spades. Splintering in Four Diamonds, although I play jump new suits in this situation as showing a second suit, or showing a long suit in hearts via Three Hearts will not accomplish much in terms of enabling responder to express an opinion. I would not have opened Two Clubs as I like to bid heavy 1 level openings with shape but it is definitely close and with merit with this three loser hand.

*And Phillip goes even further with a fake splinter:*  
**Alder:** Four Clubs. This is an ideal moment for a fake splinter bid and one point in the scoring. Yes, I would have opened Two Clubs. I think it is clear-cut

*It's nearly Christmas—I will give you eight.*  
*In BM standard, Four Clubs is a splinter, but many play that after a simple raise, jumps in new suits should be natural slam tries (after all it is very unlikely you have a slam on after a simple raise unless you have a very powerful two suiter. Given that it is*

*still nearly Christmas I have elected to let this go and give its proponents a decent mark:*

**Bird:** Four Hearts. This is a natural slam try. If I bid Three Hearts instead, I could happily bid Four Diamonds over Three Spades. Yes, but he may bid Four Spades and then Five Diamonds might lift us into minus-score territory.

**Smith:** Four Hearts. Slam try. In classic bidding 4m was a two suiter and a slam try and I'm not sure why Four Hearts should be any different, the theory being that having opened with a one bid the only hand type worth a slam try facing a simple raise is a big two suiter? This hand is not close to a Two Club opening IMHO: think about how you would feel after Two Clubs—(Two Diamonds)—Pass—(Five Diamonds) to see why, and even a raise to Four Diamond would leave you terribly placed.

*Is it so much better after One Spade—(Two Diamonds)—Pass—(Five Diamonds)? If the opponents are going to be at the five level, you are in trouble no matter what, though I agree you have a comfortable Four Hearts over only Four Diamonds.*

*Marc states "This hand is not close to a Two Club opener". Barry agrees it is not close, but...*

**Rigal:** Six Hearts. I do not think it close, I'd open Two Clubs since game is decent facing ♠xx ♥10x ♦xxxx ♣xxxxx (Four Hearts). I'm going to settle for simplicity and bid Six Hearts now, trying to get to the right 5-3 fit.

*Didn't I tell you that there was a wide divergence of opinion?*

*The trick here is to bid a grand which is flat out on a 3-2 trumps break opposite ♠Qxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣Axxxx, though given that the oppo may fail to reach a slam at all, this may not be with the real odds for a grand slam.*



## 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♦ This is the system opening for this pair on 4-4ms

2♦ FG Checkback

2NT Not 4♥, not 3♠, not five good ♦s

3♣ Natural

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
3NT	10	10
Three Spades	9	6
Three Hearts	8	1
Four Clubs	6	1
Any other bid	1	0

*Lots of complaints about the opening bid here, including the two Canadian, pre-complaints from problem 1. OK, I agree it is a heap of rhubarb, but would it really have made any difference if I had made the diamonds QJxx or even KJxx, when the hand would have been an automatic opener? Largely whingeing about the opening bid, half the panel just want to get out of the auction as soon as possible and refuse to either show their reasonable spades (in context) or their club support. As you will have gathered I do not have much sympathy for this, but perhaps they can convince me they are right:*

**Carruthers:** 3NT. Leave me alone, partner. It's still an eight-loser hand. I want nothing to do with slam

unless he can insist on it. Yes, I agree with opening the bidding, despite that. Thank you for asking.

**Teramoto:** 3NT. I have already shown 4-4 in minors or five bad diamonds. Now I bid 3NT as I am minimum and have values in hearts and diamonds.

**Apteker:** 3NT. I have a minimum hand, despite the three 10's, and do not want to encourage partner to go on. If I had the ace of diamonds, I would encourage with Three Diamonds. I would give delayed Three Spades support if I did not have sufficient values in the red suits.

*And there is the rub—are these sufficient values in the red suits?*

**Brock:** 3NT. I have a horrible hand with a decent heart stopper. I want to be as discouraging as possible. The fact I have four clubs doesn't seem enough reason to counteract all the bad stuff.

**Byrne:** 3NT. If I understand this style correctly then my 2NT bid basically showed 4-4 in the minors (perhaps 2-3-5-3 with bad diamonds) so the fact that I actually have four card club support is hardly surprising or inspiring (*OK, that is a strong argument*). I wish if I could tell whether partner was four spades/ive clubs or five spades/four clubs but the soft holdings in the red suits strongly suggest no trumps (*I do not understand this at all Michael, sorry. Given that partner has enough to force to game, partner would have bid his hand naturally starting with Two Clubs if he had four spades and five clubs. Or, if for some reason he had started with One Spade, he would not be bidding Three Clubs now*). The fact I am aceless also suggests that Five Clubs (or Six Clubs if that is where we are heading?) will be a struggle, even facing AQxxx spades and KQxxx clubs we will be off three quick red tricks (*and do not have nine tricks in 3NT!*). I also wish I knew how many points I had shown but presumably I

am drop dead minimum (*no \*\*\*\*, Sherlock!*) so I want to discourage partner from bidding on. On balance I shall try 3NT and hope partner can pull when it is right.

*Several are tempted by Four Clubs:*

**Wolff:** 3NT. With Four Clubs 85%. My hand is just too weak to scurry past 3NT, especially with having secondary strength in the two red suits. Only a question of style with these type of hands (although I would not open this one, even with three 10s).

**Alder:** 3NT. My immediate reaction was to bid Four Clubs, but this is such an unappealing soft hand.

**Silver:** 3NT. I admit I am tempted to show my good club fit, but after opening this junk pile I have to slow the auction down, in the belief if we do have a slam our way partner will bid again.

*Slam ain't the problem, I assure you Joey.*

**Bird:** 3NT. I like to play Three Clubs over 1NT as forcing with a five card suit and would therefore know that Three Clubs showed only four cards. Some say 'All game sequences go through Two Diamonds' and would be uncertain of the club length. Anyway, my hand is nothing special and

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Three Hearts now might imply doubts over the heart stopper.

*For the record, BM standard—sorry NBM standard now—says “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.” So, it is pretty certain partner only has four clubs (though actually at the table the opposite methods as described by David were being played).*

**Green:** 3NT. But that does depend on what partner has shown. It would be helpful to know what a direct Three Clubs over 1NT would be, as if that would be show five spades and four clubs and a slam try then I might act differently if I knew the hand was game only. With such a poor hand I want to stay low I could try three hearts but we could bypass 3NT when it's right.

*With six votes, next up is showing our tertiary support for spades. We have already denied three spades, so this support is pretty good. We could after all have a singleton (everyone would rebid 1NT on say ♠x*

*♥AKJx ♦Jxxxx ♣Axx I am sure). Those who bid seem very comfortable with it and bid it for positive reasons rather than the 3NT bidders who bid it for negative reasons.*

**Rigal:** Three Spades. Not an opening bid though I might open this I admit. Three Spades now stands out doesn't it? J10 is pretty much equivalent to three trumps anyway and I've denied three.

**Robson:** Three Spades. May as well own up to two spade honours and not great reds.

*I think “not great red cards” is the relevant point here.*

**Sime:** Three Spades. Partner is unbalanced (and so is his hand). Whichever red suit he is short in, we have only one sure guard. And, it is likely that suit will be led. So, we should look for alternatives to 3NT. I would prefer Ax or Kx for Three Spades, but the ten could prove useful.

*Marc has always expressed strong systemic preferences (good!) and his comment here is no exception::*

**Smith:** Three Spades. Having agreed to play an absurd system I was tempted to make a random bid such as Six Clubs now. Having already denied holding three spades when I bid 1NT (and if I haven't then why not?) why I cannot bid Two Spades with two honours over partner's FG Two Diamond bid is beyond me. As to having agreed to open One Diamond on 4-4 in the minors, all I can ask is why as there is no possible advantage (and considerable disadvantage) from doing so?

*So, what can we say here? My experience of doing this column and of playing the game is that::*

*It is certainly not mainstream or automatic to raise 1M to 2M on balanced hands with three card support. Certainly, most of the partnerships I play in, raising 1M to 2M DENIES a balanced hand with three card support. I bet if I polled the panel most would be rebidding 1NT. I do not need to tell you*

*that you would be sent to the guillotine in France for raising 1M to 2M without four.*

*Whilst I agree I prefer to open One Club rather than One Diamond on balanced hands with 4-4 in the minors, again it is not universal and you will recall that a few months ago there were serious moans, mainly from North Americans, about having done so. It is hardly a major crime to play that way.*

*Would it have made so much difference on this hand? The auction is identical apart from you having opened One Club. So what?*

**Bowyer:** Three Spades. Having opened the bidding on muck what else do you want me to bid? A slam?

*Ho ho!*

**Lawrence:** Three Spades. Should imply 2-3 in the majors. Maybe Three Hearts. I'm not ready to give up a major suit contract. This is not an opening bid for me. Some elevens but not this one.

*The mention of Three Hearts brings us to:*

**Kokish:** Three Hearts. This hand has improved a bit, but not enough to justify Four Clubs to go past 3NT. Three Spades has appeal too, lacking the ♥A, but with so little in high cards I'd rather show something in hearts while denying a slam-suitable diamond holding. East can still be 5-2-2-4 with lots of high cards.

*Only Drew is prepared to go past 3NT:*

**Cannell:** Four Clubs. Support partner and get on with the auction. This should imply 2-3-4-4.

*Partner held ♠AKxxx ♥- ♦Kxx ♣K9xxx. Against 3NT the defence led a heart to the ace and a heart back to the jack and queen and third heart setting up the suit. The clubs came in, but the spade queen was offside so down it went. Meanwhile, either black suit game is against a brick wall. Is partner supposed to pull 3NT? Well maybe, but give partner my example hand above and you can see how easily 3NT might be the best game by a long way.*

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## PROBLEM 5

**Pairs. Dealer North. All Vul**

♠ AQ5  
♥ AJ863  
♦ 6  
♣ AQ74

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
–	2♠*	Pass	Pass
?			

2♠ 5♠ & 4+ any other suit, 5-10 HCP

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Double	10	8
2NT	9	4
Three Hearts	9	6
Pass	2	0
3NT	1	0

*A nasty problem, made worse by the fact it is Pairs, with its emphasis on plus scores. I suspect that if this had been a straight weak two more of the panel may have opted for 2NT, as the least of evils. It is over strength (or certainly top of the range) for a protective 2NT, but at least keeps everything (including 2NT!) in the park. The problem with 2NT here is that North is almost bound to lead their (presumed) diamond suit and that does not look good. Nevertheless, four panellists opt for it (as I did when given the problem). Eric expresses my view perfectly:*

**Kokish:** 2NT. Excellent problem as Double and Three Hearts are both sensible alternatives. Getting the strength across is often a sound strategy. Three Hearts would be an underbid of sorts, a potential overstatement of the suit and understatement of spade stoppers, albeit the easiest route to hearts. Double risks Lebensohl continuations and could wrong side no-trump. Worrying too much about diamonds is not productive at this point.

**Brock:** 2NT. I don't really like it but it seems the best of a bad job. I have enough to think that game may be on so I don't want to pass Two Spades. I'd rather struggle in no-trumps than play in hearts with possible bad breaks.

**Smith:** 2NT. Not perfect, but this is as close as I can get to describing my hand. Both Three Hearts and Double seem to be flawed even more and Pass isn't an option.

**Bird:** 2NT. Not perfect, I realise, but surely better than Double or Three Hearts.

*Not according to the panel David, no! But that brings us those offerings. We start with Three Hearts, whose advocates are put off NTs by the singleton diamond:*



**Eric 'The Koach' Kokish**

**Bowyer:** Three Hearts. Another vile problem. Let's try Three Hearts and hope the sun shines. Over a straight weak two I might have tried 2NT but here that's very dangerous.

**Alder:** Three Hearts. I hope partner knows what to do. 2NT looks dangerous with the likely diamond lead.

**Teramoto:** Three Hearts. The stiff diamond suggests we should not bid 2NT.

**Apteker:** Three Hearts. It is either Three Hearts with the under strength suit or the offbeat 2NT. Not enough to double and bid hearts. I prefer to show the fifth heart with Four Hearts our likeliest best game. The diamond lead is also likely in NT so the singleton is a big flaw.

**Silver:** Three Hearts. Too dangerous to double or bid 2NT with only a singleton diamond, so I might as well show my main suit, and hope for the best.

**Wolff:** Three Hearts. With 2NT 90%. Pass and double are both ridiculous, leaving only Three Hearts.

*Despite Bobby's description of it, and to my great surprise, as they are not usually this way inclined, just under 50% of the panel vote for the off shape takeout double. Everyone hopes to use the Lebensohl sequences to their advantage. Several are just intending to bid Three Hearts over 2NT, showing a hand too good for an immediate Three Hearts. Fair enough I suppose – by the rule of the transferred king we do have a 20 count.*

**Green:** Double. Nothing is ideal. I'm a bit strong for 2NT in the protective seat and obviously the wrong shape. I'm a bit strong and don't have enough hearts for Three Hearts. So, I will try Double and bid Three Hearts on the next round if I can.

**Rigal:** Double. Start with double and plan to use Lebensohl auctions – but won't play Three Diamonds of course. Will bid hearts over 2NT.



**Robson:** Double. Then Three Hearts. Not an immediate Three Hearts and play in a silly 5-1.

*John and Iain are on the same page:*

**Carruthers:** Double. Pretty ugly, I agree. However, it does allow partner to show some values with Three Diamonds (I'll bid 3NT) or deny them with 2NT (I'll bid Three Hearts).

**Sime:** Double. Lebensohl to the rescue. If partner bids Three Diamonds (values) I will bid 3NT, if 2NT then Three Diamonds I bid Three Hearts. Double won't always turn out well, but seems to have a better chance than Pass, 2NT or Three Hearts.

**Lawrence:** Double. 2NT has obvious objections. Three Hearts is an underbid.

**Byrne:** Double. Our flexible friend. This hand is familiar to me, have we had the companion hand in recent months? (*No, but since it comes from a Manchester club duplicate you may actually have played it*) My first thoughts were to try 2NT but then I spotted the foot note that said spades and a minor, they never lead a spade into the tenace they always fish out the diamond lead and things go badly regardless of what partner has. My plan is to double and bid Three Clubs over 2NT, then over Three Diamonds bid Three Hearts showing this sort of hand. (cue Alan to say "does it?"). If partner bids Three Diamonds over double I will bid on with Three Hearts, and hope to find a safe resting spot.

*Indeed, you are right. Does it?? Your suggestion makes no sense to me. When partner has clubs (unlikely but possible) you play Three Clubs with game or even slam cold (♠Kx ♥x ♦xxxx ♣Kxxxxx) and when partner has diamonds you soldier on (swap partner's minors and you are making nothing). More importantly what does Three Clubs over 2NT then Three Hearts over Three Diamonds show? Without*

*discussion (and who has?) I would argue that this shows a hand that has been IMPROVED by Three Diamonds, not made worse. Maybe even this hand with the minors reversed. We need the KOACH to tell us what all these sequences mean.*

**Cannell:** Double. Least of evils. This is not the time for a skewed 2NT call.

*The actual hand is a death trap and your only winning call is Pass, which as Bobby said, is absurd, and no one was close to it. Partner held ♠xxx ♥K ♦KJxxxx ♣xxx and opener was 6-1-5-1. It is simply a matter of how many you go off in whatever you choose to play.*

## 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

?

2♠

3♦

Natural and weak

Lebensohl in place, so this is constructive but not forcing

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Four Spades	10	16
Six Diamonds	9	1
Four Hearts	7	1
4NT	6	0
5NT	6	0
Five Diamonds	1	0

*OK the panel have this one right. We have shown a*

*strong hand, and partner has shown some values and a fair number of diamonds. We have great controls. Time to let partner in on the secret with a cue-bid. By the largest majority of the set by a long way, 16 out of 18 bid Four Spades.*

**Apteker:** Four Spades. Slam is possible opposite as little as KQxxxx in diamonds and out. I do not feel I have enough to take over and bid 4NT.

*And to my surprise, neither did anyone else Alon.*

**Kokish:** Four Spades. Having promised East neither prime diamond support nor a rose garden, the controls and developmentally possible heart suit merit a slam co-operative move but do not merit asking for key cards. East will know she has a good hand when she sees one.

*She (or rather me – only she at weekends ☺) would have done I assure you.*

**Cannell:** Four Spades. Cue-bid in support of diamonds. Partner may do the heavy lifting now with RKCB or a return cue-bid if a slam is in the offing.

*Alon, Eric and Drew are not going to commit to a slam, Sally is driving at least six:*

**Brock:** Four Spades. I'm going to at least Six Diamonds, probably seven. Four Diamonds is quite a statement here as he has gone past 3NT (he had an easy Three Spades bid to ask for a spade stopper). If he has KQxxxxx and out with a singleton heart, or KQxxxx with a black-suit king, the grand slam is decent.

*The point that partner did not bid Three Spades is very pertinent I think, suggesting plenty of shape and/or slam ambitions, both of which are good for us. Ben makes the same point:*

**Green:** Four Spades. I think I must make a slam try as opposite as little as KQ10xxx and K of clubs, slam is reasonable. I can't bid the hearts again as partner may have a singleton. The fact that partner did not try for 3NT via a Three Spade bid should

suggest that he is very distributional.

*Amusing that Sally and Ben give the same example hand and one says it makes the small decent and the other the grand decent!*

**Byrne:** Four Spades. For now. I am sure at the table I would bid Blackwood but since I have enough keycards to bid a small slam anyway Four Spades is probably more useful (plus the panel never seems to vote for it). Partner appears to hold a long suit and I have a trick source and plenty of aces, these hands tends to play quite well. I think KQxxxx and the KH might give us a grand but I have a feeling partner might have raised with doubleton support, so I imagine six is the limit.

*The difference in hand valuation is extraordinary here, from Alon, Eric and Drew feeling comfortable about Four Spades, Sally, Ben and Michael driving slam and Barry, who feels that you are “just about worth a slam try”:*

**Rigal:** Four Spades. Just about worth a slam try since partner could easily have long enough diamonds to make slam no worse than the heart finesse.

**Bird:** Four Spades. I am playable in diamonds and don't like the idea of rebidding Four Hearts now. Four Spades is possibly ambitious from someone who normally regards caution as a virtue. However, when in Rome....

*Your fellow mouse is in agreement with you David:*

**Bowyer:** Four Spades. Sure, we've shown a good hand but not one as good as this. Time for a cue.

**Smith:** Four Spades. Surely worth one more try on the way to Five Diamonds. I'd expect about KQxxxx and king for this auction. If it's the singleton ♥K we're virtually cold for 13 but opposite a black king and relatively short hearts it should be no worse than the heart finesse into the pre-empter. Ideally, partner will have a singleton heart and can

ruff the suit good opposite this many entries.

*All good points.*

**Wolff:** Four Spades. To cater to what I think is probable, partner having 6+ good diamonds and another important card, and of course, a likely heart singleton.

**Robson:** Four Spades. Must try for the diamond slam which will be good facing most hands with ♦KQxxxx.

*On his own, Joey is unhappy about our previous action:*

**Silver:** Four Spades. Personally, with only a one suited hand I prefer (by a lot) Three Hearts over Two Spades. However, it is too late for that now. I have shown a good hand with a heart suit, but partner has over-ruled ne showing he has values, and wishes to play in diamonds, so with all my aces why not co-operate with jim, and try to risk a diamond slam (I have to be consistent with my takeout double, which gave partner the opportunity to express an opinion, so the time in the auction has come for me to respect it.

*Wow!! The idea of bidding a protective Three Hearts on a 19 count with a good six card suit would not have occurred to me. Is partner really supposed to raise with ♠xx ♥Kxx ♦Kxxx ♣xxxx? Sorry, that would not occur to me either. Not even the Koach suggested Three Hearts as an option.*

**Sime:** Four Spades. Slam is in the frame, with any red suit finesses likely to work. In fact, a grand is conceivable.

**Teramoto:** Four Spades. Cue-bid agreeing diamonds and showing a good hand.

**Lawrence:** Four Spades. Not sure where this will go but my hand is easily good enough for six or seven diamonds. Four Hearts is a possible choice as well. Not impossible that Four Hearts is the right spot. East's shape will play a role here.



**Joey Silver**

*Only John bids Four Hearts:*

**Carruthers:** Four Hearts. This auction does not quite insist upon hearts as Four Hearts instead of Double or Four Hearts after Three Diamonds would have done. On this auction, he could have something like king-queen-to-six diamonds and a queen (*surely that is not a constructive Three Diamonds opposite a protective double, John?*); he could have jumped to Four Diamonds with more or cue-bid Three Spades with more still.

*And last up, Phillip bids what he thinks partner can make:*

**Alder:** Six Diamonds. What is your best guess? I might as well go for the big pay-out – but I am assuming the heart finesse will work.



Partner held ♠x ♥x ♦K1098xxx ♣KJ10x so Six Diamonds is cold. Seven fails as trumps are 4-0. This hand was rather amusing at the table as we conducted an unimpressive auction to Five Diamonds and gained 11 IMPs for our trouble. The Two Spade opener was from Larry the Lamb as it was ♠KQ10xxxx ♥Jxx ♦- ♣Qxx. At the other table the hand was opened Three Spades and our hand closed the auction with Four Hearts. After a spade lead and a spade ruff, declarer tried to cross to hand with a diamond. ♦ ruff, ♠ ruff, ♦ ruff later left the ♥K still a trick for one off.

## PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul

♠ QJ8  
♥ J103  
♦ A63  
♣ A543

West	North	East	South
–	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
?			

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Pass	10	10
Three Hearts	8	3
3NT	8	3
Four Diamonds	8	1
Three Spades	7	1
Four Clubs	2	0

An amusing hand this. Partner has made a takeout double, asking us to bid out best suit. Not a single panellist, not one, chooses to bid our only four card suit ☺. The usual solution to problems like this is to Pass and watch them go off. I suspect that we would have had more votes for Pass were it not that partner

is a passed hand. This means that the points are more or less evenly split and the Villains are pretty much guaranteed to have nine diamonds between them. Three Diamonds doubled making is therefore a lively possibility. Nevertheless, just over half the panel think this is their best chance for a plus score and go for it. None are exactly overjoyed at their choice:

**Bowyer:** Pass. Oh frabjous joy! Let's try for a plus score by passing. If partner has, say, ♠Kxxx ♥Kxxx ♦x ♣Kxxx we are still favourites to take five tricks. Anything else is going to go minus.

**Cannell:** Pass. Gulp! Sometimes the balanced smattering is defensive oriented – sometimes not.

*Michael invokes THE LAW:*

**Byrne:** Pass. Uh oh, bring on the minus score. Assuming partner is 4-4-1-4 (I have to guess at something!) we have eight total trumps and they have nine, so if they are making 470 we are probably losing 500 anyway, although escaping the double is probably the best chance of a small minus (Quite – since North has no idea what South has got for this Three Diamond opening and South has no idea North has any values, it is highly unlikely anyone will double you). Should I try three of a major? No, I'm sure not. Not only will the horror of a 3-3 fit scar for life (and I would expect partner to double routinely with 4-3-1-5 or 3-4-1-5), even on the rare occasions where I hit a good hand partner sometimes double crosses you and raises to game (yeah right – partner passes and then raises 3M to game. Well if it did that it would be completely cold surely?). What the hell, I am going to try a pass. People pre-empt on rubbish and I fancy a small plus score...or a large minus one!

*Joey and Andrew for The LAW as well:*

**Silver:** Pass. ECH!! I ain't happy, but I am trapped with nowhere to go, and nowhere to hide except (I hope) behind "The LAW".

**Robson:** Pass. Spin the three-way coin between 3NT, Four Diamonds and Pass. It's a Law pass for sure and certainly the action most likely to go plus (if smaller).

**Bird:** Pass. 'Really? that's a bit risky.' Yes, but none of the alternatives is any less risky. Do I want to play for five tricks or nine in a possibly dodgy fit?

**Lawrence:** Pass. And lead the queen of spades. Chances of getting a plus score this way looks more likely than from bidding something.

**Smith:** Pass. The options are not the least bit appetising – neither Three Hearts on a 4-3 fit nor Four Clubs on this junk facing a passed hand rate to be a raving success. I am not a fan of passing takeout doubles, but doing so seems to represent the best chance of avoiding a disaster here. Even -470 may be cheaper than some alternative contracts.

**Green:** Pass. 3NT seems a long way off opposite a passed hand and Four Clubs could be a 4-3 or even a 4-2 fit on a bad day (imagine partner with a 4-5-2-2 hand). I'll try a pass and hope to defend sensibly.

**Brock:** Pass. Depends a bit on whom I'm playing against, but a lot of people really take liberties in this position. Alternatively, he can be quite decent (say KQ10xxx and an ace) and I won't make 3NT (which is my second choice). I'd expect to get at least 500 if we're making game, but if I bid I might not bid the best game.

*Ben and Sally have mentioned 3NT. I cannot see this. We know we do not have the values for it; are likely to have only one diamond stop and any suits we do have are not likely to break. It seems very unlikely to make, and it seems to me that the best reason to bid it is if you think Three Diamonds is making, so this will be cheaper. Three try it. John for the reasons I have espoused:*

**Carruthers:** 3NT. What can I do? I'm not guessing

three of a major and Four Clubs is a nothing bid with little upside. Pass is not even a consideration. Not that I expect to make 3NT, but North cannot double, whatever he holds, opposite a third-seat three-bid (I hope). If I'd had a four-card major, I would have bid it.

**Alder:** 3NT. I expect you will tell us that pass was the only winner.

*That is usually the case Phillip, but this time, no.*

**Apteker:** 3NT. While we do not have sufficient values for game in NT, I can hold up in diamonds to hopefully cut off LHO. Pass is not an option, Four Clubs may find a 4-2 fit (*which is why none of the panel bid it—Alan*) and potentially goes past our best game as partner could easily have 5-5-1-2 shape and Four Diamonds, searching for the 5-3 major fit, could run into bad trumps breaks with no ruffing value in our hand.

*Only Eric is prepared to risk the four level in search of strain:*

**Kokish:** Four Diamonds. Chances are good that East has some five card suit, and in this situation (double by a passed) a cue-bid advance is about strain rather than level, so East will bid his long suit rather than his cheapest four-plus-card suit. Of course, this will work poorly if East lacks that five-card suit, but it's worth hoping for something like: ♠Kxxx ♥Q9xxx ♦x ♣KJx, where finishing in the right suit can make all the difference. Not that game has to be a great proposition, but getting there has a nice upside, vulnerable.

*The remaining four panellists guess to try three of a major. Three go for Three Hearts and one for Three Spades:*

**Rigal:** Three Hearts. I don't mind being out in left field here, since passing rates to a very bad outcome facing the typical reopening action. Partner rates to have both majors rather than C+M if he



**Alon Apteker**

is flawed. They haven't doubled me yet.

*Bobby is in trenchant mood this month and has nothing good to say about the passers:*

**Wolff:** Three Hearts. Pass 50%. In reality I think the passers should be strung up by their toes with Four Clubs the only other bid to be considered. I have much negativity directed toward final decisions which may make partner crawl in a hole in the future and passing a TO double is the main culprit.

**Sime:** Three Hearts. I don't want to hang my passed partner for doubling, or deter him from doing so again. So not Pass, and not 3NT. If I am doubled in Three Hearts we can escape.

*There may be no escape—but that is a good reason for Three Hearts rather than Three Spades.*

**Teramoto:** Three Spades. Not easy. Unlikely to have game on opposite a passed partner.

*This hand comes from the English Premier League and this auction occurred a number of times. On VuGraph, the auction occurred at both tables in the match between Allfrey and Small, Graham Osborne for Allfrey bid 3NT and was -200 for his trouble. That was 7 in when Small passed and found he could not beat it. Partner held ♠K9xxx ♥Ax ♦J ♣Q109xx. The pre-emptor is ♠xxx ♥KQxx ♦Q109xxx ♣J so they can beat Four Spades on a club ruff, which was not always found. It makes Eric's Four Diamonds bid look attractive doesn't it?*

## PROBLEM 8

**IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.**

♠ 4  
♥ AKQ72  
♦ A1063  
♣ KQ4

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

Bid	Marks	No. of Votes
Three Clubs	10	8
2NT	9	7
3NT	7	3
Four Hearts	2	0
Three Hearts	1	0

*I have observed before in this column the differing tendencies of North American and UK players with respect to fourth suit forcing. In many sequences, for North Americans fourth suit is essentially natural, or*

*at the very least, patterning out, whereas for UK players fourth suit is always fourth suit, mostly requesting a NT guard. And so it is here again, with the voting split almost equally (eight to seven) between Three Clubs (almost all North Americans) and 2NT (almost all Brits). I am unconvinced either style is better, it is just cultural differences. Let's interleave them and see what, if anything, we can learn.*

**Cannell:** Three Clubs. A patterning out move to allow partner a picture of my hand for choice of level and strain.

**Sime:** 2NT. I have more than an ace extra for my bidding thus far. I will complete my picture.

*Note that Drew thinks he is patterning out with Three Clubs, and Iain thinks he is with 2NT... That pattern is repeated:*

**Carruthers:** Three Clubs. That was the easy part; the hard part may come next. I've described my hand fairly well; partner should know what to do next.

**Bowyer:** 2NT. About describes what I have.

**Lawrence:** Three Clubs. I have enough to make a game try and this bid seems routine for that purpose. Partner knows if he has two hearts or three and if 3NT is a possible spot, he will know to bid it. Keeps clubs in the picture. Wondering if Two Diamonds was best. Close to unanimous?

*Whenever anybody says that, it is usually not even the top vote winner. This time it is (just!). Mike thinks Three Clubs will be close to unanimous whereas David thinks....*

**Bird:** 2NT. Many thanks for this useful example for a beginner's textbook on bidding. Of course, a panel of real experts may manage to think of a different bid.

*See what I mean about the cultural differences? This too is repeated:*

**Rigal:** Three Clubs. Bidding out shape and showing

extras; I guess I won't stop out of game, but I'm glad you didn't ask me.

**Smith:** 2NT. No second choice. If I was constructing a hand for a textbook to illustrate the sort of hand partner should expect for this auction, this wouldn't be far from what I'd come up with.

**Silver:** Three Clubs. Two good a hand to give up on a juicy vul game bonus, so I will risk bidding out my hand, and see if my OX has a good club suit. I would hate to play in Two Hearts with five or six clubs cold our way. So risking a minus by bidding over Two Hearts is certainly in my opinion worth it.

**Robson:** 2NT. So, what is the difference between 2NT and Three Clubs here?

*I was hoping the panel would be able to tell us. I cannot say I think I have learnt anything. Have you Andrew?*

**Wolff:** Three Clubs. A relatively small lie (one club too few) in order to keep it open for either 3NT, Four Hearts, Five Diamonds or Five Clubs.

*Michael at least offers a view as to what the difference between 2NT and Three Clubs is:*

**Byrne:** 2NT. After partner's weak preference it is natural to pattern out, and 2NT shows 1-5-4-3 or 2-4-5-2 with a club stop. I am tempted to bid Three Clubs, which would get a similar message across, but I think that should be reserved for an anti-positional stopper such as Axx, where right siding the contract (partner having Qx or the like) would be crucial.

*Sally is the one Brit who bids Three Clubs:*

**Brock:** Three Clubs. I think bids should be naturalish in this situation, with 2NT generally being 5-4-2-2. Often partner has bid One Spade on some terrible four card suit.

*And Eric is the one North American who bids 2NT (agreeing with Michael's interpretation of the*

*difference between the bids):*

**Kokish:** 2NT. 3NT would be too much opposite what could be a five count with 4-2-3-4 shape. Three Clubs would suggest Axx or Jxx rather than a notrumpy club holding.

*Three panellists do just bash 3NT and invite the lead:*

**Green:** 3NT. Too strong for 2NT which partner might pass with the right minimums where we are making game. Three Clubs for me would be fourth suit looking for help in clubs which I don't need.

**Teramoto:** 3NT. Values have increased a little by the heart support from partner. 3NT should show about a good 18 and good hearts.

**Apteker:** 3NT. Partner is likely to have some constructive values to have bid One Spade, with 2 hearts vulnerable otherwise he may have passed One Heart (*Really? Why?*). 2NT should show a good 16 to poor 18. I have a good 18 and do not want to miss the vulnerable game.

*Last word this month to Phillip, who for this joke wins Comment of the Month:*

**Alder:** Three Clubs. This seems clear... but, but my total score will have me solidly in or near the cellar. I just hope you stock some good redders.

*The problem on this hand was not only to get to clubs (as several panellists suggested), but to get to a SLAM in clubs (or hearts or NTs from partner's hand), since partner held ♠Kxxx ♥J10 ♦x ♣AJxxxx. I cannot construct any particularly convincing sequence to it, so if any reader can, let me know. Partner has a real problem hand himself over Three Clubs, since he wants to make a slam try in clubs, but has not got many ways to do it. Maybe Four Diamonds ought to be a splinter over that, and maybe Four Spades ought to agree clubs (since it is impossible we want to play in spades now) but wheeling those out without discussion is fraught with danger. And who knows what*



*4NT is – presumably a good Five Club bid?*

*A mixed bag for the first competition in the new magazine. One problem only had two panel votes, and all bar two had at least 50% of the panel choose the same bid, but two problems had six bids, and one five, which is pretty good going with a panel of 18.*

*The very first gold for the new magazine goes to Sally Brock on 79, with silver to Andrew Robson on 78 and a three-way tie for bronze between Paul Bowyer, Mike Lawrence, and Bobby Wolff on 77.*

*Have a good 2018 one and all.*



**Sally Brock**

## SET 320 – THE PANEL'S BIDS & MARKS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	England	2♥	Pass	3♥	3NT	2NT	4♠	Pass	3♣	79
Andrew Robson	England	2♥	Pass	3♥	3♠	Dble	4♠	Pass	2NT	78
Paul Bowyer	England	2♥	Pass	3♥	3♠	3♥	4♠	Pass	2NT	77
Mike Lawrence	USA	2♦	Pass	2NT	3♠	Dble	4♠	Pass	3♣	77
Bobby Wolff	USA	2♦	Pass	3♠	3NT	3♥	4♠	3♥	3♣	77
David Bird	England	2♥	Pass	4♥	3NT	2NT	4♠	Pass	2NT	76
Michael Byrne	England	2♥	5♣	3♥	3NT	Dble	4♠	Pass	2NT	76
Ben Green	England	2♥	Pass	2NT	3NT	Dble	4♠	Pass	3NT	76
Joey Silver	Canada	2♥	5♠	3♣	3NT	3♥	4♠	Pass	3♣	76
Marc Smith	England	2♥	Pass	4♥	3♠	2NT	4♠	Pass	2NT	75
Drew Cannell	Canada	2♥	5♥	3♥	4♣	Dble	4♠	Pass	3♣	74
Iain Sime	Scotland	2♦	5NT	3♥	3♠	Dble	4♠	3♥	2NT	74
Phillip Alder	USA	2♥	5NT	4♣	3NT	3♥	6♦	3NT	3♣	73
Barry Rigal	USA	2♦	5NT	6♥	3♠	Dble	4♠	3♥	3♣	73
Alon Apteker	South Africa	2♦	Pass	3♣	3NT	3♥	4♠	3NT	3NT	72
Tadashi Teramoto	Japan	2♦	Pass	3♥	3♥	3♥	4♠	3♠	3NT	72
John Carruthers	Canada	2♦	4NT	3♥	3NT	Dble	4♥	3NT	3♣	71
Eric Kokish	Canada	2♦	5♥	3♥	3♥	2NT	4♠	4♦	2NT	71



## Master Point Bidding Battle Competition – Set 2

Open to All – Free Entry

### PROBLEM 1

IMPs. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 87532  
♥ KQ76  
♦ A53  
♣ K

West	North	East	South
–	1♦	2♣	Pass
?			

### PROBLEM 2

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ AK  
♥ AJ6  
♦ AQ8653  
♣ 76

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

### PROBLEM 3

IMPs. Dealer East. None Vul.

♠ Q864  
♥ Q109853  
♦ J5  
♣ A

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥*	Pass	3♣*	Pass
?			

2♥ Natural and forcing with 5+ ♥s

3♣ Natural and not forcing

### PROBLEM 4

IMPs. Dealer North. None Vul.

♠ 6  
♥ AJ84  
♦ AQ75  
♣ K1076

West	North	East	South
–	1♣	1♠	Pass
?			

### PROBLEM 5

IMPs. Dealer East. All Vul.

♠ 7532  
♥ A10752  
♦ 76  
♣ QJ

West	North	East	South
–	–	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥*	Pass	4♣	Pass
?			

3♥ Promising 5+ ♥s

### PROBLEM 6

IMPs. Dealer East. E/W Vul

♠ AK96432  
♥ 75  
♦ 96  
♣ A4

West	North	East	South
–	–	1♣	1♥
1♠*	4♥	4♠	Pass
?			

1♠ Promised 5+ ♠s for this partnership

### PROBLEM 7

IMPs. Dealer North. E/W Vul.

♠ AQ5  
♥ AKQJ108  
♦ QJ9  
♣ A

West	North	East	South
–	2♦*	Pass	2♥*
?			

2♦ Weak only multi

2♥ Pass or correct

### PROBLEM 8

IMPs. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ KQJ1063  
♥ 54  
♦ AQJ64  
♣ –

West	North	East	South
1♠	3♥*	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

3♥ Natural and weak

Send entry to [biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com](mailto:biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com)  
or enter via the website [www.newbridgemag.com](http://www.newbridgemag.com).  
Entries to arrive before the end of the month.



# 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](mailto:biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com) or enter via the website [www.newbridgemag.com](http://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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup>.

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  
February 2018 Partnership Profile

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 East. None Vul.

♠ 7  
♥ 974  
♦ AJ65  
♣ AQ753

Hand 2. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ 103  
♥ Q985  
♦ AK10984  
♣ A

*North overcalls 1♠*

Hand 3. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ AQJ97  
♥ K8  
♦ —  
♣ KJ8742

*South opens 1♦ and if West bids 2♣ North bids 2♦*

Hand 4. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ AKQJ942  
♥ —  
♦ AKQJ10  
♣ A

*South opens 4♥*

Hand 5. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ AJ4  
♥ 10  
♦ AJ107  
♣ AK974

Hand 6. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ AJ1097  
♥ KJ2  
♦ Q10  
♣ 1043

Hand 7. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ Q8  
♥ AK  
♦ A8653  
♣ 6543

*South opens 1♥ and if West passes North bids 1♠ which South raises to 2♠, North bidding 3♠*

Hand 8. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ AJ62  
♥ Q1072  
♦ —  
♣ QJ982

*North overcalls 1♠*

## 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 not 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 e-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](mailto:biddingbattle@newbridgemag.com) or enter via the website at [www.newbridgemag.com](http://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  
February 2018 Partnership Profile

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 East. None Vul.

♠ A964  
♥ A3  
♦ KQ987  
♣ K4

Hand 2. Dealer West. All Vul.

♠ AK82  
♥ AJ1043  
♦ —  
♣ Q1084

*North overcalls 1♠*

Hand 3. Dealer East. E/W Vul.

♠ 108  
♥ A107  
♦ J109876  
♣ A3

*South opens 1♦ and if West bids 2♣ North bids 2♦*

Hand 4.. Dealer East. None Vul

♠ —  
♥ K10432  
♦ 654  
♣ KQ954

*South opens 4♥*

Hand 5. Dealer North. Both Vul.

♠ K3  
♥ AKQJ532  
♦ 6  
♣ 1032

Hand 6. Dealer West. Both Vul.

♠ —  
♥ 965  
♦ AKJ3  
♣ AKQ986

Hand 7. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ 7  
♥ J854  
♦ QJ  
♣ AKJ872

*South opens 1♥ and if West passes North bids 1♠ which South raises to 2♠, North bidding 3♠*

Hand 8. Dealer South. None Vul.

♠ K4  
♥ K84  
♦ KQ  
♣ AK10754

*North overcalls 1♠*

## Running Costs

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](http://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 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. Setting up a standing order to pay a modest sum each month is an option suggested by one of our readers.

If you would like to discuss any of the above contact me at: [editor@newbridgemag.com](mailto:editor@newbridgemag.com)

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